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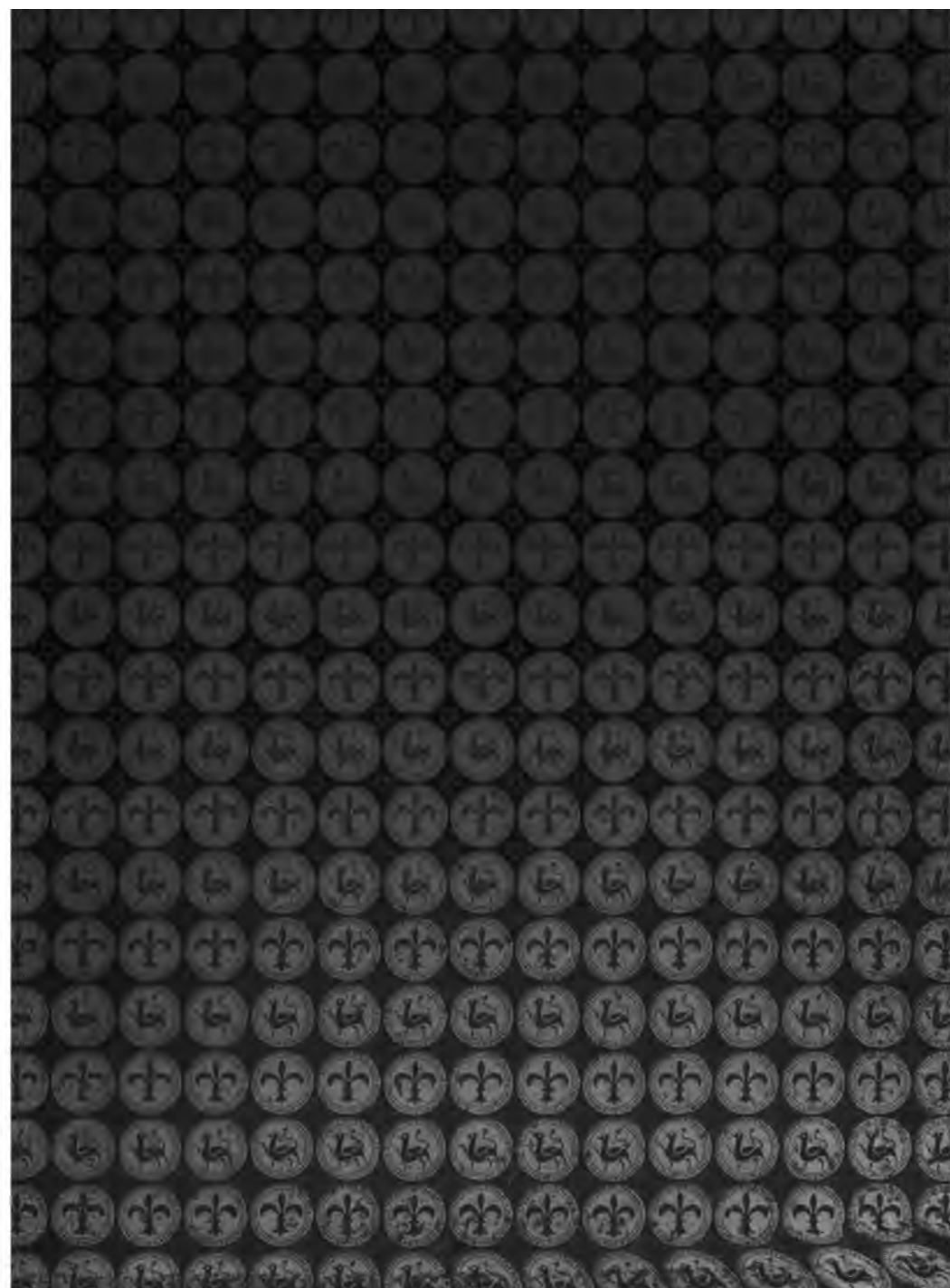
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THE PHILOBIBLON OF RICHARD DE BURY

Augerville, Richard

THE PHILOBIBLON OF RICHARD DE BURY

EDITED FROM THE BEST MANUSCRIPTS
AND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH WITH
AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
• ANDREW FLEMING WEST •
PROFESSOR IN PRINCETON COLLEGE
PART SECOND ~~~ ENGLISH VERSION



Nic aurum tibi non valet ubi nitet Philobiblon



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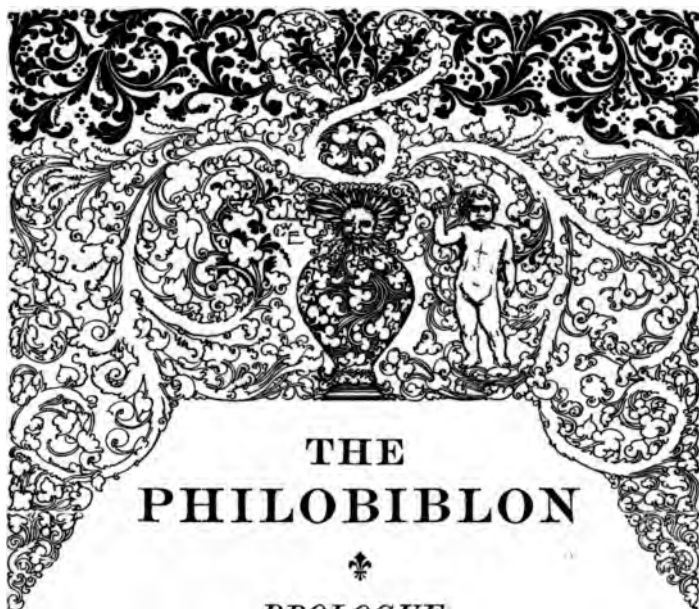
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NOTE.

**The marginal numbers in this volume correspond to
the pages of the Latin text in the first volume.**





*O all the faithful in Christ unto whom
the tenor of this present writing may
come, Richard de Bury, by the Divine
mercy Bishop of Durham, wisheth
eternal health in the Lord, and also
to present a pious memorial of himself before God,
alike in life and after his decease.*

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What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? asks the devout psalmist, that invincible
king and chiefest of the prophets. In this most grate-
ful inquiry he acknowledgeth himself a willing repayer
and a manifold debtor, and a seeker after a counsellor
holier than himself; agreeing with Aristotle, the prince
of philosophers, who proves in the Third and Sixth of
his Ethics that all action turns upon counsel. Surely,
if so admirable a prophet, acquainted with the Divine
secrets, desired so anxiously to meditate upon the way
in which he might acceptably make return for these gra-
cious benefits by rendering thanks, what shall we, who
are but rude thankers and most greedy receivers, laden
with endless Divine benefits, be able to resolve upon
more worthily? Doubtless with anxious deliberation
and redoubled circumspection (first invoking the septi-
form Spirit, to the end that His illuminating fire may
glow in our meditation) we ought the more earnestly
to prepare an open way, so that the Bestower of all
things may be readily worshipped out of His gifts con-
ferred upon us, our neighbour be relieved of his bur-
den and the guilt daily contracted by sinners be atoned
for by the remedy of alms.

Prologue.

Being forewarned, therefore, through this devout admonition by Him who alone anticipates and fulfills the desires of man, without whom no sufficiency is supplied us even for our meditation, and whose gift, we openly confess, is whatever good we may have done, we have diligently taken counsel with ourselves, as also by inquiring in company with others, what among the good offices of the divers kinds of piety would in the first instance be pleasing to the Most High and benefit the Church Militant. 11

And lo! there comes before our view a host of out-cast scholars; nay, rather of chosen scholars, in whom God the Creator and His handmaiden Nature have planted the roots of most excellent character and noble knowledge. But so far hath the want of the necessities of life oppressed them that, with an adverse fortune opposing them, the seeds of virtue, which are so fruitful, are left to parch in the untilled field of their youth, unmoistened by the favour of the needful dew. Thus it happens, in the words of Boethius, that bright virtue lies hidden in obscurity, and it is not that lamps are lighted and put under a bushel, but from want of oil are utterly gone out. Thus the field that

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flowers in the springtime is parched before the harvest. Thus the crops degenerate into weeds, the vines into the wild vine, the olives run to wood in the wild olive
¹² *and the tender shoots waste away altogether, while those who might have grown up to be strong pillars of the Church, having been endued with the capacities of subtle minds, abandon the schools of study. Under poverty alone as their stepmother they are violently repelled from the sweetened cup of philosophy as soon as they have tasted it, to thirst again more fervidly by reason of the tasting. Though fit for the liberal arts and wholly disposed to meditation in the Scriptures, yet, deprived of the support of kinsmen, they return as by a kind of apostacy to the mechanical arts solely for the support of their living, to the loss of the Church and the degradation of the whole clergy. Thus Mother Church in begetting sons is forced to miscarry, nay, from her womb some unshapen offspring is born out of due time, and, from want of that small and slender support which suffices for nature, she loses famous pupils, who ought later to be promoted to be champions and athletes of the faith. Alas, how suddenly the web is cut while the hand of the weaver is yet working! Alas,*

Prologue.

that the sun is eclipsed in the brightness of its dawning and the advancing planet retrogrades in its course, and, though it displays the form and nature of a true star, suddenly falls and becomes a meteor! What more pitiful can a pious man behold? What will pierce more sharply the bowels of compassion? What will 13 sooner melt a heart, though hardened as an anvil, into the warmest tears?

Furthermore, arguing from the opposite, let us recall from past events how much it advantaged the whole Christian commonwealth, not indeed to weaken students with the luxuries of a Sardanapalus nor with the wealth of a Cræsus, but the rather to support them, when poor, in scholarly frugality. How many have we seen with our eyes or gathered knowledge of from writings, who, though having no renown of birth, and enjoying the succession to no inheritance, but supported only by the piety of the good, have won their way to apostolic chairs, ruled most uprightly their faithful subjects, subjected the necks of the proud and lofty to the ecclesiastical yoke, and insured a broader freedom for the Church.

Wherefore, after surveying human necessities in all

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directions with a view to bestowing our charitable regard, the affection of our compassion hath especially preferred to bear pious aid to that calamitous class of men, in whom, however, there lies such hope of advantage to the Church, and to provide them not only with things needful for their living, but much more with books, which especially are useful for their study. Unto this
14 *end, most acceptable in the sight of God, our unwearied attention hath long since been directed. This ecstatic love hath borne us away so mightily, that, casting aside other earthly things from our mind, we have burned only with the passion for gathering books.*

Accordingly, that the end of our intent may be clear as well to posterity as to those of our own time, and that we may, so far as pertaineth to us, stop forever the mouths of them that speak perversely, we have issued a little treatise after the lightest style of the moderns. For it is absurd in authors that a light matter should be written in a lofty style. This treatise, divided into twenty chapters, will purge from the accusation of excess the love we have held toward books, and will proclaim the purpose of our eager devotion, and make clearer than light the circumstances of our attempt.

Prologue.

*And inasmuch as it treats chiefly of the love of books,
it hath seemed well to us, conforming to the fashion of
the ancient Latins, pleasantly to name it after a Greek
word, Philobiblon.*

Here endeth the Prologue.



ERE BEGIN THE CHAPTERS OF THE PHILO- ¹⁵
BIBLON OF RICHARD, BISHOP OF DURHAM.

That the Treasure of Wisdom Lieth Especially in
Books.

What Love is Reasonably Due to Books.

How in Buying Books the Price is to be Fixed.

The Complaint of Books against the Clerks Lately
Promoted.

The Complaint of Books against the Religious Pos-
sessioners.

The Complaint of Books against the Religious Men-
dicants.

The Complaint of Books against War.

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Of the Manifold Opportunity We Have Had for
Gathering a Multitude of Books.

That though We Love More the Works of the
Ancients yet We Have Not Condemned the
Studies of the Moderns.

Of the Successive Perfecting of Books.

Why We Have Preferred the Books of the Liberal
Arts before the Books of Law.

Why We Have Taken Such Diligent Care to Amend
the Books of Grammar.

Why We Have not Wholly Neglected the Fables of
the Poets.

Who Ought to be the Especial Lovers of Books.

What Benefits the Love of Books Confers.

How Worthy a Task it is to Write New Books and
Repair Old Ones.

Of Showing Honourable Respect in the Care of
Books.

That We Have Gathered Such a Multitude of Books
for the Common Advantage of Scholars, and
Not Only for Our Own Pleasure.

Of the Manner of Distributing Our Books to All
Students.

An Exhortation to Scholars to Repay in Supplica-
tions on Our Behalf the Debt of Piety They
Owe.



FIRST CHAPTER.

That the Treasure of Wisdom Lieth Especially in Books.



THE desirable treasure of wisdom and 16
knowledge, which all men covet by
an instinct of nature, infinitely sur-
passes all the riches of the world.
In respect to this precious stones
are cheap; in comparison with this silver is clay
and purified gold but paltry sand. In its splendour
both sun and moon darken to the sight; in its admi-
rable sweetness honey and manna grow bitter to the
taste.

O excellency of wisdom that wasteth not with 17
time! ever-flourishing virtue that purgeth all venom
from its possessor! O heavenly gift of the Divine

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bounty descending from the Father of Lights, to bear up the rational spirit, even unto heaven! Thou art the heavenly food of the mind, and they who eat thee shall hunger again, and they who drink thee shall thirst again. Thou art a melody bringing joy to the soul of him that is weary, and he who hears thee shall in no wise be confounded. Thou art the mistress of morals, and the rule which he that observeth shall do no sin. By thee kings reign and princes decree justice. By thee, laying aside the rudeness of nature, polishing their thought and speech, and plucking out by the roots the thorns of vice, they attain the heights of honour, becoming fathers of their country and companions of princes, who, but for thee, had beaten their spears into pruning-hooks and ploughshares, or, haply, with the prodigal son had now been feeding swine.

Where is thy hiding place, O choicest treasure, and where shall thirsting souls discover thee? In books assuredly hast thou set up thy tabernacle, for there the Most High, the Light of Lights, the Book of Life, hath established thee. There every one

The Treasure of Wisdom in Books.

that asketh for thee receiveth, and he that seeketh ¹⁸ findeth, and to those that knock with importunity it is quickly opened. In these the cherubim spread forth their wings, that the mind of the student may mount aloft and view everything from pole to pole, from the rising to the setting sun, from the north and from the sea. In these the Most High incomprehensible God Himself is apprehensibly contained and worshipped. In these appears the nature of things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal. In these are to be seen the laws by which every state is governed; the ranks of the heavenly hierarchy are set in their order, and dominions of demons are described, such as neither the ideas of Plato transcend nor the chair of Crato ever explained.

In books I behold the dead alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books the affairs of war are displayed; from books proceed the rightful laws of peace. All things decay and waste away in time, and those whom Saturn begets he ceaseth not to devour. Oblivion would overwhelm all the glory of the world, had not God provided for mortals the remedies of books. Alexander, the subduer of the

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earth; Julius, the invader of Rome and of the world, who, first in art and first in arms, took on himself the empire in his single person; the faithful Fabricius and the severe Cato would to-day be
19 out of memory, had they lacked the support of books. Towers are razed to the earth, states are overthrown, triumphal arches have mouldered into dust, and neither Pope nor King will find aught by which the warrant of eternity is conferred more easily than by books. A book once made renders its author this return, that, so long as it shall endure, the author remaining *athanatos*, or immortal, cannot perish, as witness Ptolemy in the Prologue of his *Almagest*. That man, he saith, is not dead who hath given life to knowledge.

Who then will limit by aught of lesser value the price of the infinite treasure of books, from which the wise scribe brings forth things both new and old? Truth, surpassing all things, excelling the king and wine and women, and the honouring of which above friends ranks as a kind of holiness (for it is the way without a winding and the life without an ending, and to it the holy Boethius assigned a

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triple nature, to wit, in thought, in writing, and in speech), seems to dwell more usefully and to bear fruit to richer advantage in books. For the virtue of the voice dies with the sound, and truth lying in the mind is hidden wisdom and unseen treasure. But the truth that shines in books seeks to manifest itself to every impressible sense; to the sight when it is read, to the hearing when it is heard, ²⁰ and moreover commendeth itself in some sort to the touch, while suffering itself to be transcribed, collated, corrected, and preserved.

Though the undisclosed truth of the mind may be the possession of a noble soul, yet, because it lacks a companion, it cannot be called delightful, for neither sight nor hearing judge of it. And the truth of speech is manifested unto the hearing alone, avoiding the sight which showeth us more of the various differences of things, and, being attached to a most subtle motion, hath its beginning and its ending as in an instant. But the written truth of a book, not fleeting but lasting, discloses itself plainly to the sight, and, passing through the open portals of the eyes, the antechamber of perception and the

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halls of the imagination, enters the chamber of the understanding and reclines upon the couch of memory, where it engenders the eternal truth of the mind.

Finally, consider what delightful teaching there is in books. How easily, how secretly, how safely in books do we make bare without shame the poverty of human ignorance! These are the masters that instruct us without rod and ferrule, without words of anger, without payment of money or clothing. Should ye approach them, they are not asleep; if ye seek to question them, they do not
21 hide themselves; should ye err, they do not chide; and should ye show ignorance, they know not how to laugh. O Books! ye alone are free and liberal. Ye give to all that seek, and set free all that serve you zealously. By what thousands of things are ye figuratively recommended to learned men in the Scripture given us by Divine inspiration! Ye are the mines of deepest wisdom unto which the wise man, in the Second of Proverbs, sends his son thence to dig treasure. Ye are the wells of living water which father Abraham digged at first, Isaac cleared, and which the Philistines

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strove to fill again (the Twenty-sixth of Genesis). Ye are, in truth, most delightful ears filled with corn, to be rubbed by apostolic hands alone, that the sweetest food may drop forth for hungering souls (the Twelfth of Matthew). Ye are the golden pots in which is stored the manna; rocks that flow with honey, yea, also honeycombs; udders streaming with the milk of life; store-houses ever full. Ye are the tree of life and the fourfold stream of Paradise, by which the human mind is fed and the arid intellect is moistened and watered. Ye are the ark of Noah and the ladder of Jacob, and the troughs in which the young of those that look therein are changed in colour. Ye are the stones ²³ of testimony, the pitchers that hold the lamps of Gideon, and the scrip of David, from which the smooth stones are taken for slaying Goliath. Ye are the golden vessels of the temple, and the arms of the soldiery of the Church, by which the darts of the most Wicked One are quenched. Ye are fruitful olives, vineyards of Engadi, fig-trees that know not barrenness, burning lamps ever to be held forth in the hand; yea, all the best of Scripture could we adapt to books did it please us to speak in figures.



SECOND CHAPTER.

What Love is Reasonably Due to Books.



Everything according to the degree of its value merits a like degree of love — and that the value of books is unspeakable the preceding chapter convinces us — so it is plainly clear to the reader what with probability should be thence concluded. For we make no use of demonstration in moral questions, calling to mind that it is the mark of a disciplined man to seek for certitude, according as he has perceived the nature of his question to require, as witness the archphilosopher in the First of his Ethics. Thus Tully hath no need of Euclid, nor doth Euclid lean on Tully.

But this, indeed, we would strive to prove, be it by logic or rhetoric, that all riches or delights

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whatsoever ought to give way to books in the spiritual mind, where that Spirit, which is charity, ordaineth charity; and this, first, because wisdom is chiefly contained in books beyond all that mortals naturally comprehend, and wisdom surpasses riches, as the preceding chapter alleges. Moreover, Aristotle in his Problems, the Thirtieth Particle and Tenth Problem, decides this question, Why the ancients, who established prizes for the stronger in gymnastic and bodily contests, never proposed any prize for wisdom? This he solves in his Third Answer thus: In gymnastic exercises the prize is more to be desired and better than that for which it was given. But nothing can be better than wisdom; hence, no prize could be assigned to wisdom, and, therefore, neither riches nor pleasures surpass wisdom. 24

Again, that friendship is to be preferred before riches none but the fool will deny, since the wisest of men beareth witness to this, the most holy of philosophers honours truth above friendship, and the true Zorobabel sets it above everything. Riches then are less than truth. But truth is chiefly con-

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tained and preserved in holy books. Nay, they are the very written truth, inasmuch as for the present we do not assert the material parts of books to be books. Wherefore, riches are less than books, and though friends especially are the most precious kind of all riches, as Boethius witnesseth in the Second of his Consolation, yet, according to Aristotle, the truth of books is to be preferred before friends. Again, as riches are seen to pertain first and chiefly to the support of the body alone, but the excellence of books is in the perfecting of reason, which is properly called the true good of man, it is clear that, to a man who useth his reason, books are dearer than riches. Moreover, that by whose means the faith may be more suitably
25 defended, more widely spread and more clearly preached, ought to be loved the more by the faithful. But this is the truth that is written in books, as our Saviour made more than plain. For when making ready to quit Himself stoutly against the Tempter, He girded Himself with the shield of truth, not truth of any sort, but that which was written, saying "It is written" concerning that

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which He was about to utter by the oracle of His living voice (the Fourth of Matthew).

Again, no one doubts that happiness is better than riches. But happiness consisteth in the operation of that noblest and diviner power that we have, when the mind is wholly free for contemplating the truth of wisdom, which is the most delectable of all operations next to virtue, as the chief of philosophers determines in the Tenth of his Ethics. On this account philosophy, as he conformably writes, appears to possess marvellous pleasures from its purity and certainty. Now the contemplation of truth is never more perfect than through books, for the act of imagination while continued by a book does not allow the action of the mind upon the truths it beholds to be interrupted. Wherefore books appear to be the most immediate instruments of speculative pleasure. Hence Aristotle, the sun of philosophic truth, after defining the principles of choice, teaches that in itself it is more desirable to be a philosopher than to be rich, although on occasion, according to circumstances, as in the case of one in need of the necessities of

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life, it may be more desirable to be rich than to be a philosopher (the Third of the Topics).


Still again, since books are our most agreeable teachers, as the preceding chapter assumes, it is right to pay to them both the love and the honour due a master. Finally, as all men by nature desire knowledge, and as by books we can obtain the knowledge of the ancients, which is to be chosen above riches, what man that liveth true to nature would not have a hungering for books? And though we know that swine despise pearls, the judgment of a wise man is in no way altered by this, that he should not gather the pearls that lie before him. More precious then than all wealth are the libraries of wisdom, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her (the Third of Proverbs). Whosoever, then, confesseth himself zealous for truth, for happiness, for wisdom, or for knowledge, or even for the faith, must needs make himself a lover of books.





THIRD CHAPTER.

How in Buying Books the Price is to be Fixed.

 FROM what has been said before, we ²⁷ draw a corollary pleasing to ourselves, but, as we believe, acceptable to few. It is this: that no dearness ought to hinder a man from buying books, if he has that which is asked for them, save when he resists the avarice of the seller or awaits a more convenient time for buying. Therefore, if it is wisdom alone that makes the price of books, and wisdom is an infinite treasure for man, and if the value of books is unspeakable, as our premises suppose, how shall the bargain be proved to be dear when the good that is purchased is infinite? Wherefore, Solomon, that sun of men, admonishes us in the Twenty-third of Proverbs that

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books should be bought freely but sold unwillingly.

28 Buy the truth, he saith, and sell not wisdom. But what we are proving by rhetoric or logic let us add unto by the facts of history.

The archphilosopher, Aristotle, who Averroes thinks was given mankind as a law of nature, bought the few books of Speusippus, after his death, for seventy-two thousand sesterces. Plato, earlier in time but behind him in his teachings, bought the book of Philolaus the Pythagorean for ten thousand denarii, and from this he is said to have taken his dialogue of the Timæus, as Aulus Gellius relates in the Sixteenth Chapter of the First Book of the Noctes Atticæ. Moreover, Aulus Gellius relates this that the fool may consider how wise men reckon money of no value in comparison with books.

And contrariwise, that we may understand how folly is joined with every sort of pride, consider the folly of Tarquinius Superbus in despising books, related by the same Aulus Gellius in the Nineteenth Chapter of the First Book of the Noctes Atticæ. An old woman, wholly unknown to him, is

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said to have approached the proud Tarquin, seventh king of the Romans, offering for sale nine books, in which, as she averred, the divine oracles were contained. But she required for them so vast a sum of money that the king said she was mad. In rage she cast three of the books into the fire, and for the residue required the sum which she had asked at first. When the king refused, again she cast other three into the fire, and still for the three that remained demanded the first-named sum. At last, amazed beyond measure, Tarquin paid gladly for the three books the sum for which he could have bought the nine. The old woman, unseen before this or after, straightway disappeared.

These are the Sibylline books, which the Romans consulted as an oracle by one of fifteen men, and the office of the Quindecimvirate is believed to have had its origin from this. What else did this Sibyl prophetess teach the king by so crafty a deed, except that the vessels of wisdom, holy books, surpass all human reckoning? And Gregory speaks likewise concerning the kingdom of heaven: All that thou hast, that is its value.



FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Complaint of Books against the Clerks Lately Promoted.

30



GENERATION of vipers destroy-
ing their own parents, and the
worthless offspring of the ungrate-
ful cuckoo, which, when it has
gathered strength, slays its own
nurse, the bestower of its powers—such are de-
generate clerks toward books. Lay it to heart
ye transgressors, and consider faithfully what ye
receive through books, and ye shall find that books
are, as it were, the creators of your whole noble
estate, and without them, doubtless, your other
promoters would have failed you. To us, in sooth,
ye crept while wholly rude and without power, ye
spake as children, ye thought as children, and cry-
ing as children begged to be made sharers in our

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milk. And we, touched by your tears, straightway extended to you the paps of grammar to suck, and³¹ these ye plied assiduously with tooth and tongue, until your native barbarousness was taken away, and ye began to speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. After this, we clad you in the right goodly robes of philosophy, namely, rhetoric and dialectic, which we had and still have with us, for ye were naked, and like a tablet yet unwritten. For all the household of philosophy is clothed in double garments, that both the nudeness and the rudeness of the mind may be covered. After this, in order that being winged in the manner of seraphim ye might soar above the cherubim, adding to you the four wings of the quadrivium, we sent you to a friend at whose door, if only ye would knock importunately, there would be loaned you the three loaves of the knowledge of the Trinity, in which consisteth the final happiness of every pilgrim here below.

But should ye say that ye have not these gifts, we confidently assert that ye have either lost through carelessness those that were bestowed, or

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being indifferent at the first, ye spurned them when offered. If things of this sort seem trifles to you, let us speak of those that are greater. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, chosen unto the lot of the
32 Lord. Ye are priests and ministers of God; nay, by *antonomasia*, ye are called the very Church of God, as though laymen were not to be called churchmen. And ye, while the laity are set aside, chant psalms and hymns in the chancels, and serving at the altar ye make the true body of Christ, in which thing God Himself has honoured you not only more than the laity, but even a little more than the angels. For to which of the angels said He at any time: Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek? Ye dispense the inheritance of the Crucified to the poor, wherein it is now required in stewards that a man be found faithful. Ye are the shepherds of the Lord's flock, both in example of life and in word of doctrine, and they are bound to repay you with both milk and wool. Who are the bestowers of all this good, O clerks? Are not books? Remember then, we pray, how many notable privi-

Complaint of Books against Clerks.

leges of priests are conceded through us to clerks. Imbued by us, who are the vessels of intellectual wisdom, ye ascend the master's chair and are called of men Rabbi. Made marvellous by us in the eyes of the laity, like great lights of the world, ye are settled in the dignities of the Church, according to your various lots. Consecrated by us at a tender age and yet lacking the down upon your cheeks, ye bear upon your heads the tonsure and are instantly protected by the dread sentence of the Church: Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. And whoso touches them rashly, let him instantly be violently smitten, by his own blow, with the hurt of an anathema. 33

At last, yielding your lives to wickedness, and reaching the forked way of the Pythagorean figure, ye choose the left hand branch, and, turning backward, forsake the lot of the Lord which ye had first chosen, and become partakers with thieves. Thus, ever advancing to a worse estate, stained with robberies, murders, and manifold impurities, your good name and your conscience defiled by crimes, on the arrest of justice ye are put under

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guard in the keeping of manacles and fetters, awaiting the punishment of a most shameful death. Then lover and friend is put far from you, and there is none to pity your lot. Peter swears that he knows not the man. The rabble clamours to the judge : Crucify him ! crucify him ! for if thou let this man
³⁴ go thou art not Cæsar's friend. And now all hope of flight is gone, for ye must be taken to the judgment seat ; nor is there granted a place for appeal, and naught but hanging awaits you. While thus sorrow hath filled the heart of the wretched man, and only the stricken Muses wet their cheeks with tears, he is hemmed in by straits on every side. Then, mindful of us, and to avoid the peril of imminent death, he displays the slight token of the ancient tonsure which we gave him, praying that we may be summoned to his side and made the witnesses of the gift that we bestowed. Then, straightway moved by a compassion, we run to meet the prodigal son, and rescue the fleeing slave from the gates of death. The book not yet forgotten is handed him to read, and at his short reading, though he stammers from fear, the power of the

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judge is broken, the accuser retreats, and death is put to flight. O marvellous power of a formal verse ! O saving antidote to dreadful death ! O precious reading of the Psalter, which from this alone deserves to be named again the Book of Life ! Let laymen endure the secular judgment. Sewed up in sacks, let them swim away to Neptune, or, planted in the earth, bear fruit to Pluto, or offer themselves in the flames a fattened holocaust to Vulcan, or, at least, let them be hanged as victims to Juno, while our nursling, by one reading of the book of life, is handed over to the custody of the bishop, and thus rigour is converted into favour. Thus while judgment is suffered by the layman, death is averted from the clerk, the foster-child of books. 35

But now let us speak of clerks who are vessels of virtue. Who of you mounts to the pulpit or desk to preach, if we have been wholly unconsulted ? Who enters the schools to read or dispute unsupported by our help ? First, ye ought, with Ezekiel, to eat the volume by which the belly of your memory may be sweetened. And thus, after the manner of the

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sated panther, your breath shall sweetly exhale without of the spices conceived within. For at his breathing, all beasts and cattle pant with desire to approach him. So, while our nature works secretly among our own familiar friends, they run to us well pleased as listeners, just as the adamant draws the iron in no wise unwilling. O infinite virtue of books! There they lie at Paris or in Athens; at the same time they resound in Britain and in Rome. Though at rest they move, and while yet they keep their own places are borne around everywhere to the understandings of those that hear them. Finally,
36 we establish by knowledge of letters both priests and bishops, cardinals and the Pope, that all things in the hierarchy of the Church may be duly set in order. For in books is found the source of whatever good can come to the clerical state. But no more of this, for it grieves us to recall what we have given to the degenerate race of the clergy, because those things seem rather lost than really given, which are bestowed as gifts on the ungrateful.

Now let us press for a little a recital of the wrongs which they visit upon us in the way of contempt and

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injury. Nor are we able to name all the separate kinds of these; nay, scarcely the barest classes of each. First, then, we are driven by force of arms from the homes of the clergy, which belong to us by hereditary right; and we, who once had our cells in the innermost chambers in quiet, alas! in these shameful times, being utterly exiled, suffer our reproach without the gate. Our places are taken now by dogs and birds and now by a biped beast, cohabitation with whom the clerks were anciently forbidden, and whom we have ever taught our fosterlings to flee more than the asp and the basilisk. Wherefore, being ever jealous of our study, and at 37 no time placable, when at last she has found us in some corner protected only by the web of a dead spider, wrinkling her brow, she reviles and mocks at us with venomous words. She makes it plain that we alone of all the furniture of the house are superfluous, and complains that we are worthless for any service of the household. Soon she advises that we be exchanged for costly caps, for muslin and silk, for twice dyed purple, for robes and divers-coloured furs, and for wool and linen. And rightly

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might she do so, did she but see within our hearts, or share our private counsels, or had she read the volume of Theophrastus or Valerius, or heard with the ears of her mind even the Twenty-fifth Chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

Wherefore, we complain of our homes unjustly taken from us, and of our garments—not those that are not given, but those anciently given us, and now torn with violent hands. Our soul cleaveth unto the earth, our belly lieth on the ground, and our glory is smitten into dust. We labour with divers diseases, ailing in our back and sides. We lie with our limbs loosened by the palsy, and there
³⁸ is none to procure us a healing plaster. Our native whiteness, that shone like the light, is already turned brown and sallow, so that no physician would doubt that we were stricken with jaundice. Some of us are suffering from gout, as our distorted extremities evidently imply. The smoke and dust by which we are continually beset have dimmed the clearness of our visual rays, and have already brought ophthalmia on our bleared eyes. Our bellies are consumed by the sharp gripings of our bowels, which

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greedy worms cease not to destroy ; yea, we endure the corruption of either Lazarus, and none is found who will anoint our sores with balm or call out on the fourth day to the stinking body, Lazarus ! come forth ! Our cruel wounds, which are wickedly inflicted on the innocent, are bound up by no healing remedy, nor is there any one to put a plaster on our sores ; but ragged and shivering, we are thrown in our tears into dark corners, or, with holy Job, are seated on the dunghill, or, what seems too shameful to be told, are cast out of sight in the abysses of the sewers. The cushion is withdrawn that should prop our evangelical sides, to which, first of all, support ought to come from the allotments of the clergy, ³⁹ and thus forever the necessaries of our common living be furnished to us who are deputed for their service.

Again we complain of another sort of calamity which is too frequently visited unjustly upon our persons. For we are sold to be bondmen and bondwomen, and we lie as pledges in pawn with none to redeem us. We are handed over to cruel butchers, whereas we cannot behold sheep and cattle slaugh-

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tered without pious tears; and there we die a thousand times from that very fear which can befall even constant souls. We are given over to Jews, to Saracens, to Heretics, and to Pagans, whose poison we dread above all things, and by whose pestiferous venom it is well known that some of our parents were corrupted.

Surely we, who ought to be accounted master builders in the sciences, and to rule all mechanics who are put under us, are in turn given over to be ruled by our subordinates, as though a highly noble monarch were trodden down beneath the heels of rustics. Every tailor, or cobbler, or botcher, and the artisan of every sort keeps us shut up in prison to pay for the needless and wanton delights of the clergy.

⁴⁰ Now we wish to search into a new sort of wrong, by which we are injured, not only in our persons, but in our good name, than which we possess nothing dearer. Our nobleness of race is degraded every day, while the names of new authors are imposed on us by worthless compilers, translators, and transcribers, and, losing our ancient nobility, we

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are born again, after this manifold regeneration, wholly degenerate. And so, against our will, the names of wretched stepfathers are affixed to us, and the names of their true fathers are taken from their sons.

While Virgil himself yet lived a pseudo-poet claimed his verses, and a certain Fidentinus falsely took to himself the books of Martial, who rebuked him justly with these words:

Fidentinus! that book thou recitest is mine!
But, from bad recitation, it passeth for thine.

What wonder then, if, when our authors are dead, the apes of the clergy enlarge the borders of their garments by means of us, since even while our authors are alive, they attempt to plunder us as soon as we are edited? Ah! how often do ye represent that we who are ancient are but lately born, and endeavour to represent us as sons who are fathers, and call us who brought you to a clerk's estate the workmanship of your own studies! In truth we derive our real origin from Athens, who are now said to be of Rome, for Carmentis was ever

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a pillager of Cadmus. And those of us who but lately were born in England, will be born again tomorrow in Paris, and taken thence to Bologna will be allotted an Italian origin, based on no kinship of blood. Alas! how do ye commit us to blundering scribes to be copied! How corruptly do ye read us! How often by your remedies do ye slay us, whom ye supposed ye were amending with pious zeal! Ofttimes we suffer from barbarous interpreters, and those who know not the idioms of a language presume to translate us from one tongue to another. Thus the sense, bereft of all propriety of speech, is basely disfigured contrary to the meaning of the author. Gracious indeed had been the condition of books if the pride of the tower of Babel had in no wise intervened and only one kind of speech had descended by transmission for the whole human race.

We will add a last clause to our so tedious complaint; short enough, however, for the matter we⁴² have in hand. For in us our natural use is changed into that use which is against nature, inasmuch as everywhere we are handed over to ignorant painters

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of letters and to goldsmiths. Alas, the shame! that we who are the light of faithful souls should become but receptacles of gold leaf, as though we were not the sacred vessels of wisdom! Unjustly are we cast under the dominion of the laity, which is to us bitterer than any form of death, for it is they who have sold our people for naught, and our enemies are become our judges.

From all that has been said it is clear what endless invectives we could hurl upon the clergy, were we not sparing of our own reputation. For the veteran who has earned his discharge pays reverence to his shield and his arms, and the grateful Corydon to his worn-out cart, his harrow, his flail, and his mattock, and every manual labourer shows special veneration for his own tools. Only the ungrateful clerk neglects and thinks lightly of the means by which he attains the height of his honours.





FIFTH CHAPTER

The Complaint of Books against the Religious Possessioners.

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HE reverent devotion of the religious is wont to be aroused in the care of books, and to a delight in their conversation as in all riches. For some there were who used to write with their own hands between the canonical hours, and by taking the intervals of their leisure, they conceded the time granted for resting the body to the making of books. Because of their labours there shine to-day in many monasteries those sacred treasures filled with cherubic books, to give knowledge of salvation to the student and a delectable light to the pathway of the layman. O labour of the hands more blessed than all tilling of the soil! O devout occupation from which neither Martha nor

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Mary deserves to be called away! O joyful home, in which the fruitful Leah envies not the beautiful Rachel, but the active and the contemplative mingle their joys! Blessed provision availing to endless posterity in the future! to which we compare no planting of trees, no sowing of seed, no rustic delight in herds, no building of fortified camps. Immortal then should be the memory of those fathers, whom the love of wisdom alone delighted, and who provided against future darkness shining lamps most skilfully fashioned, and against a famine of hearing the Word of God made ready with all diligence loaves of bread not baked in ashes, nor made of barley, nor yet musty, but unleavened bread made of the purest wheat of sacred wisdom, whereby hungering souls might joyfully be fed. These were the most approved champions of the Christian soldiery. These have strengthened our weakness by their most valiant arms. These in their own generation were the most cunning hunters of foxes, and they have now left us their nets that we should take the least of the little foxes that cease not to spoil the tender vines. Truly, noble fathers, ever

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to be cherished with perpetual benediction, deservedly happy had ye been, if it had been granted you
45 to have begotten sons like yourselves and to have left after you for the help of coming time a true and undegenerate offspring.

But, in grief we mention it, now the slothful Thersites handles the arms of Achilles, and the rare trappings of war horses are spread upon lazy asses. Blinking birds of night lord it in eagles' nests, and the witless kite is settled on the perch of the hawk.

Liber Bacchus is discussed,
And into their bellies thrust
Day and night.
Liber Codex they deride,
Toss it with the hand aside,
Out of sight.

Just as if the simple modern monastic folk were to be deceived by double-tongued equivocation of speech, while Liber Pater is preferred to Liber Patrum! In draining cups and not in mending books the study of our monks is busied to-day. And to this they have no shame in adding the

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wanton music of Timotheus, the enemy of modesty. And so the song of mirth and not the dirge of woe is become the office of the monks. Flocks and fleeces, crops and barns, leeks and pot-herbs, cups and drinking are to-day the readings and the studies of the monks, saving those few elect souls in whom there remains, not indeed the likeness, but only ⁴⁶ some slight trace of the fathers who preceded them.

Again, no ground whatever is furnished us on which we may commend the regular canons of to-day for their care and study of us. Though from their double rule they bear the distinguished name of Augustine, yet they have neglected the noble couplet of that rule in which we are commended to his clergy in these words :

One hour each day let all their books obtain :
Who asks outside the hour shall ask in vain.

This devout rule of study is scarce observed by any one after the ecclesiastical service is repeated, but to know the things of the world and to gaze back at the abandoned plough is thought to be the greatest prudence. They take the quiver

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and the bow. They lay hands on arms and on the shield. The tribute of alms they give to dogs and not to beggars. They devote themselves to dice and draughts and to those things which they are wont to prohibit to the seculars, so that we do not wonder if they disdain to regard us whom they see thus opposing their habits.

O reverend fathers! deign then to remember your sires, and indulge more eagerly in the study of books, for without them all religion will begin
47 to totter, without them the virtue of devotion will become dry as a potsherd, and without them ye can shed forth no light to the world.





SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Complaint of Books against the Religious Mendicants.



POOR in spirit but most rich in faith, the offscouring of the world and yet the salt of the earth, despisers of this world and fishers of men, how blessed are ye, if suffering need for Christ ye have learned to possess your souls in patience! For it is not want, the scourge of vice, nor the misfortune of your parents, nor any desperate need that hath oppressed you with poverty, but it is your devout will and your Christ-like choice, by which ye have judged that to be the best life which the Omnipotent God, made man, proclaimed the best both by word and by example. Truly ye are the new offspring of the ever-fruitful Church, divinely substituted anew in the place of

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48 the fathers and the prophets, that your sound may go forth into all lands, and, trained in our wholesome teachings, ye may proclaim before Gentiles and kings the invincible faith of Christ. Moreover, that the faith of the Fathers is chiefly enclosed in books, our second chapter has sufficiently asserted, in which it is made clear as light that ye ought to be zealous lovers of books beyond other Christians. We are commanded to sow beside all waters, inasmuch as the Most High is not a respecter of persons, nor does the Most Compassionate wish the death of sinners, since He desired to die for them. But He longeth to heal the contrite in heart, to lift up those that are fallen, and by the spirit of gentleness to correct those that have strayed. For this most salutary end the nursing Mother Church has planted you of her grace, and when ye were planted she watered you with her favours, and when ye were watered she strengthened you with privileges, that ye might be coadjutors with pastors and curates for securing the salvation of the faithful. Hence also their own constitutions declare that the order of Preachers was principally established for

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the study of Holy Scripture and the salvation of their neighbours. Thus they may know, not only from the rule of their reverend founder Augustine, which orders books to be sought on each several day, but instantly upon reading the prologue of the aforesaid constitutions, may perceive from the very title of the book that they are bound to the love of books. 49

But alas! not only these but others who follow their fashion have been withdrawn from the paternal care and study of books by a threefold superfluous solicitude, to wit, regard for the belly, for clothing, and for houses. Neglecting the Providence of the Saviour, who the Psalmist assures us is solicitous for the poor and needy, they are concerned with the needs of this perishable body, that their feasts may be splendid, their vestments gorgeous beyond the rule of the order, and that the fabrics of their dwellings may be like the battlements of castles, of a height so great as to suit but ill with even the most exalted poverty. On account of these three things we books, who have advanced them to their perfect estate and have granted them seats of

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honour among the mighty and the notable, are far removed from the affections of their hearts and are reckoned as certain superfluities, save that they stickle for some quartos of little value, from which they bring forth their Spanish dirges and apocry-
50 phal ravings, not for the cheering refreshment of souls, but rather for tickling the ears of their hearers. Holy Scripture is not set forth but wholly set aside, as though it were a well worn tale and commonly known to all. Yet scarcely any have touched even its hem, for so great is its depth that, as Saint Augustine asserts, it cannot be comprehended through any effort of study by the human understanding, howsoever much it may be awakened. Out of it he who will study assiduously may unfold a thousand lessons of moral instruction, if only He who has created the spirit of piety will deign to open the door. These lessons will flower with ever-freshening novelty, and with a most savoury sweetness will refresh the minds of those that hear.

Wherefore, the first professors of evangelical poverty, after paying salute in some manner to

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the secular sciences, gathered together all their strength of mind and gave themselves to labour on the Scriptures, meditating day and night in the law of the Lord. Whatever they could steal from a starving stomach or snatch from a half-clad body they thought great profit to devote to amending or copying books. Their worldly contemporaries, ⁵¹ beholding both their occupation and their study, gave to them for the edifying of the whole Church the books which they had collected at great charges in divers parts of the world. Indeed, in these days, when your diligence is wholly set on gain, it is to be believed with reasonable presumption, if our speech may use the figure *anthropospathos*, that God is unmindful of you whom He sees mistrusting His own promise and setting your hope in human foresight. Ye consider not the raven nor the lilies whom the Most High feeds and clothes. Ye ponder not upon Daniel and Habakkuk, the bearer of the bowl of pottage, nor do ye regard Elijah, who was delivered from famine, now at the brook by ravens, now in the desert by the angel, and now in Sarepta by the widow, all by

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that divine bounty which giveth food to all flesh in due season, delivering them from the distress of famine. By a wretched climax we fear ye descend, for your distrust of the divine goodness begets a leaning to your own understanding, and this leaning to your own understanding begets an anxiety for earthly things, and anxiety for earthly things takes away both the love and the study of books, and thus your poverty of this day is changed by abuse to the damage of the Word of God, which ye have chosen for its support alone.

By bribes of summer fruit, so people say, ye allure boys to your religion, and when they have professed it, ye do not instruct them in its doctrines by force and fear as their age requires, but suffer that they shall give themselves to running about begging, and permit them to consume the time in which they could be learning in catching after favours of friends, to the annoyance of their parents, the danger of the boys, and the harm of the order. And so, in sooth, it happens that they, who were not in any wise compelled, when they were boys, to learn against their will, being grown larger presume to teach, though wholly unworthy

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and untaught, and the error which was small at the beginning becomes very great at the end. For there grows up in your promiscuous flock a certain multitude of laymen, wholly burdensome, who nevertheless give themselves to the office of preaching the more importunately by as much as they understand not what they say, in contempt of the divine Word and to the ruin of souls.

Surely against the law ye are plowing with the ox and the ass, when ye commit the tilling of the Lord's field to the learned and the unlearned alike. It is written: The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them. Wherefore, it is the part of the discreet to preach and of the simple to feed themselves in silence on the hearing of the Holy Word. How many stones in these days do ye cast upon the heap of Mercury! How many marriages do ye bring about for the eunuchs of wisdom! How many blind watchmen do ye instruct to walk about the walls of the church! O indolent fishermen! using only the nets of others, which, when torn, ye are so unskilled as to be scarce able to repair; but in no wise do ye furnish new ones. Ye are entered into the labours of others; ye recite the

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studies of others, and with dramatic mouthing ye utter the wisdom of others, superficially learned by rote. Even as the foolish parrot imitates the words it has heard, so these become the reciters of everything but authors of nothing, imitating Balaam's ass, which, though insensate within, yet, from its ready tongue, was made the instructor of its master, though a prophet. Come to yourselves, O ye poor in Christ, and regard us books with desire, for without us ye can never be duly shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

- ⁵⁴ Paul the Apostle, the preacher of truth and notable teacher of the Gentiles, ordered to be brought to him by Timothy for all his baggage these three things: his cloak, his books, and his parchments (the last chapter of Second Timothy); thus giving example to evangelical men, that they should keep to a moderate dress, and have their books as a help for study, and also parchments for writing, which the Apostle especially esteems; Especially, he saith, the parchments. In truth that clerk is maimed and shamefully injured to his hurt in many ways who is wholly ignorant of the art of writing. He

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beats the air with his words and edifies only those that are present, but has nothing for those that are absent, and that come after him. The man who set the mark Tau upon the foreheads of them that sighed (in the Ninth of Ezekiel), wore upon his loins the ink-horn of a writer, teaching in a figure that if any one lack schooling in writing, he should not presume on the office of preaching repentance.

Finally, at the end of this present chapter, we books entreat you: Make your youth who are fit of mind apply themselves to study, providing them the necessities; teach them not only goodness, but also discipline and knowledge; alarm them with blows; attract them with blandishments; soothe them with gifts, and urge them on by painful punishments that they may become alike Socratic in morals and Peripatetic in doctrine. Yesterday, as at the eleventh hour, the wise householder introduced you into his vineyard; before it be too late, may it repent you to have been so idle. O that with the wise steward ye had a shame of begging so importunately! for then in sooth ye would have greater leisure for study and for books.



SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Complaint of Books against War.



MOST High Author and Lover of Peace, scatter the nations that seek after war, which harms books beyond all pestilences. For wars, lacking a ground in reason, make furious assaults upon all that is opposed to them, and discarding the governance of reason, proceed
“ without discreet judgment and destroy the vessels of reason. Then the prudent Apollo is cast down beneath the Python, and then the pious mother Phronesis is reduced to the power of frenzy. Then the winged Pegasus is shut up within the stall of Corydon, and the eloquent Mercury is choked to death. Then wise Pallas falls by the sword of error,

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and the jocund Muses are suppressed by the murderous tyranny of fury.

O cruel spectacle ! where you may see the Phœbus of philosophers, the arch-sophist Aristotle, to whom God Himself gave rule over the ruler of the world, chained by wicked hands and fettered by shameful irons, carried from the house of Socrates on the shoulders of gladiators ; and he who had by right the mastery over the master of the world and an empire beyond an emperor, is subjected by the most unjust laws of war to a vile hireling soldier ! O most iniquitous power of darkness, that fears not to detract from the approved divinity of Plato, who alone was worthy to hold up ideal forms to the sight of the Creator, before the strife of warring chaos should be appeased and matter be endued with form, that he might demonstrate to its Author the archetypal world, so that from this supernal ⁵⁷ example the sensible world might be derived. O woeful sight ! where the moral Socrates, whose acts are virtues and whose speech is doctrine, and who deduced a just public polity from the principles of nature, is seen given over in slavery

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to some villainous freebooter! We mourn for Pythagoras, the father of music, cruelly scourged by the enraged furies of war and uttering dove-like plaints in place of songs. We pity Zeno, the chief of the Stoics, who, lest he should betray his counsel, bit out his tongue and spat it fearlessly at the tyrant. Alas! he is brayed again in the mortar of Diomedon!

Truly we have not sufficiency to make worthy lament for the separate books which have perished in various parts of the world by the perils of war. Yet we select for mournful mention that awful slaughter which happened in Egypt in the first Alexandrian war under the auxiliaries. There in the flames perished the seventy thousand volumes which were collected through many generations of time under the Ptolemies, as Aulus Gellius recites in the Sixteenth Chapter of the Sixth Book of his

⁵⁸ *Noctes Atticæ*. How great a progeny of Atlas may be thought to have perished at that time!—the motions of the orbits, all the conjunctions of the planets, the nature of the Milky Way, and the prognostic generations of the comets, and whatso-

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ever things happened in the heavens or are comprehended in the ether! Who would not shudder at so unholy a burnt offering, where ink is offered up in place of blood, where the glowing ashes of crackling parchment were dyed red with blood, where the devouring flame consumed so many thousands of innocents in whose mouth guile was not found, and where the unsparing fire turned into foul ashes so many receptacles of eternal truth! We reckon a lesser crime the sacrifice of Jephtha or Agamemnon, where the pious virgin daughter was slain by her father's sword. What labours of the famous Hercules, who for his knowledge of astronomy is said to have supported the heaven on his unyielding neck, must we suppose perished then, when now the second time he is cast into the flames!

The secrets of the heavens, which Jonithus learned not from man nor by man, but received by divine inspiration, the things which Zoroaster, his brother, the servant of unclean spirits, disseminated among the Bactrians, whom also the sacred Enoch, the Prefect of Paradise, prophesied ere he

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was translated from the world, yea, what the first Adam taught his sons, after he was carried away in his deep sleep and had read in the Book of Eternity, are judged with probability to have been destroyed in these shameful flames.

The religion of the Egyptians, which the book Logostilios so remarkably commends, the polity of ancient Athens, which preceded the Athens of Greece by nine thousand years, the incantations of the Chaldeans, the reflections of the Arabians and the Indians, the ceremonies of the Jews, the architecture of the Babylonians, the husbandry of Noah, the magic arts of Moses, the surveying of Joshua, the riddles of Samson, the problems of Solomon, all clearly argued out from the cedar of Lebanon even to the hyssop, the antidotes of Esculapius, the grammar of Cadmus, the poems of Parnassus, the oracles of Apollo, the Argonautics of Jason, the stratagems of Palamedes, and endless other secrets of the sciences are believed to have perished at the time of this conflagration. Think ye the apodictic syllogism regarding the squaring of the circle would have escaped Aristotle in the

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least, if shameful wars had permitted the books⁶⁰ of the ancients, which contain the laws of all nature, to survive! Neither would he have set forth the problem of the eternity of the world as indeterminate, nor, as is believed with plausibility, would he have doubted in any wise of the plurality of human intellects and of their eternity, if the perfect sciences of the ancients had not been exposed to the destruction of hateful wars. For by wars are we dragged away to foreign lands, are killed and wounded and frightfully disfigured, are buried beneath the earth, drowned in the sea, burned in the fire, and slain by every kind of death. How much of our blood was shed by the warlike Scipio, when he eagerly set himself to the overthrowing of Carthage, the opposer and rival of the Roman power! What thousands of thousands the ten years' Trojan war sent out of the light! How many, when Tully was slain, were sent by Antony to seek hiding-places in foreign provinces! How many of us, at the exile of Boethius, were scattered by Theodoric in divers regions of the world, like sheep whose shepherd had been smitten! How

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many, when Seneca fell before the malice of Nero and, willing yet unwilling, approached the gates of
61 death, were parted from him and withdrew weeping, wholly unknowing in what parts we could seek refuge!

Fortunate was the transfer of those books which Xerxes is said to have taken from Athens to Persia, and which Seleucus brought back again from Persia to Athens. O grateful restoration! O the wondrous joy which was then to be seen in Athens, when the mother went dancing for joy to meet her own offspring, and pointed out again to her now aging children their mother's nursing chamber, assigning anew the old places to their former inhabitants! At once smoothly-planed cedar boards, with polished posts and beams are prepared. Inscriptions are marked out in gold and ivory for the separate compartments into which the volumes themselves are reverently gathered and most pleasantly disposed, so that none should hinder the entrance of another, or harm its neighbour by too close a pressure.

But endless are the losses inflicted on the race of

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books by the tumults of war, and as it is in no wise possible to survey all the infinite, here let us finally establish the Gades of our complaint and draw rein in our course, turning to the prayers with which we began, humbly asking that the Ruler of Olympus ⁶² and the Most High Dispenser of all things may insure peace, remove wars, and make the times tranquil under His own protection.





EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Of the Manifold Opportunity We Have Had for Gathering a
Multitude of Books.



AS to everything there is a time and an opportunity, as the wise Preacher testifieth in his Eighth Chapter, we now proceed to tell in order the manifold opportunities by which, with the divine favour aiding our intentions, we were helped in the acquiring of books. Though even from our youth up we were ever delighted to hold friendly communion with men of letters and lovers of books, yet when our affairs became prosperous on attaining the notice of the King's Majesty, being received into his household, we obtained a larger opportunity of visiting wheresoever we would, and of hunting, as it were, through certain very choice preserves, to wit, the private and public

Our Opportunities for Gathering Books.

libraries, both of the regulars and seculars. Indeed, while we held various offices under the invincible and ever gloriously triumphant King of England, Edward, the Third since the Conquest (whose times may the Most High deign long to make serene and peaceful!), first of all in offices concerning the Court, and after that as Chancellor and Treasurer, which concerned the State, there was opened to us through regard for the king's favour, a ready entrance for freely searching into the hiding-places of books. Indeed the flying rumour of our love for books now spread everywhere—so much so that we were reported to be even languishing from our desire for them, chiefly for ancient books, and that any one could easier obtain our favour by quartos than by money. Wherefore, being supported by the goodness of the aforesaid Prince of ever to be cherished memory, we could notably advance or hinder, promote or obstruct both the great and the small, and there consequently flowed “ to us in place of pledges and presents, in place of gifts and prizes, bleared quartos and decrepit books, precious alike in our sight and our affection.

Then the chests of the noblest monasteries were

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opened; cases were brought forth, and caskets were unlocked, and volumes that had slumbered long ages in their tombs awakened astonished and those that had lain hidden in places of darkness were overwhelmed with rays of new light. Books once most dainty, but now become corrupted and disgusting, strewn over with the litters of mice and bored with the gnawings of worms, were lying about almost lifeless; and those that once were clothed in purple and fine linen, now prostrate in sackcloth and in ashes seemed given over to oblivion as habitations of moths. Nevertheless, seizing on every moment of leisure we sat down among them with greater pleasure than a dainty physician would have done amidst stores of spices, for there we found both the object and incitement of our love. Thus the vessels of sacred wisdom came into the control of our stewardship, some by gift, others by sale, and some by loan for a time.

No wonder when many saw that we were contented with gifts of this sort, they strove of their own accord to furnish for our uses their books which they themselves would more gladly lose,

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rather than the things which they might hope to obtain by assisting in our service. We graciously made it our care, however, so to expedite their affairs that gain accrued to them, and yet justice suffered no harm. Truly, had we loved gold and silver cups, spirited horses, or no small sums of money, we might at that time have stored up a rich treasure for ourselves. But, indeed, we preferred books to pounds, and loved parchments more than florins, and cared more for lean pamphlets than fat palfreys. Moreover, in performing frequent embassies for the same illustrious Prince of everlasting memory, we were sent on tedious embassies in times of peril, now to the Roman See, now to the Court of France, and now to divers kingdoms of the world, yet bearing with us everywhere that love of books which many waters could not quench. This like a honeyed drink sweetened the bitterness⁶⁸ of all our travel. This, after the perplexing intricacies and troublesome difficulties of cases and almost interminable labyrinths of public affairs, opened to us for a little the balminess of a gentle atmosphere to breathe.

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O Blessed God of Gods in Zion! how great a flood of pleasure delighted our heart as often as we had leisure to visit and sojourn at Paris, the paradise of the world, where the days always seemed to us but few for the greatness of the love that we had. There are delightful libraries, fragrant beyond stores of spices; there are green pleasure-gardens of all kinds of volumes. There are academic meadows shaking beneath the tread of scholars, lounging-seats of Athens, walks of the Peripatetics, jutting peaks of Parnassus and porches of the Stoics. There is to be seen the measurer of all art and science, Aristotle, whose is all that is best in doctrine so far as concerns this passing sublunary world. There Ptolemy marks out his epicycles and the eccentric Auges and the Dragon of the planets with figures and numbers. There Paul reveals the mys-
67 teries; there his near neighbour Dionysius arranges and distinguishes the hierarchies; there the virgin Carmentis represents in Latin characters all that Cadmus had gathered up in Phœnician grammar. There, indeed, did we open out our treasures and loosen our purse strings, and, scattering money

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with a glad heart, purchased priceless books with dirt and sand.

It is naught, it is naught, in vain said every buyer ; for behold how good and how pleasant it is to gather together in unity the arms of the clerical soldiery, that there may be furnished us wherewithal to crush the assaults of heretics, should they arise. Furthermore, we recognize that we obtained very great advantage from this, in that from their tender years we had attached to our following, with rarest solicitude, and without partiality, those masters and scholars and professors of the different arts, whom their subtleness of mind or celebrity of teaching had rendered famous.

Strengthened by their comforting conversation, we were pleasantly refreshed as by a varied and abundant feast of reason, now by demonstrative courses of reasoning, now by the recital of physical processes and treatises of Catholic doctors, and now by quickening conferences on questions of morals. Such we had as comrades in our following, such as companions in our chamber, such as attendants on our journeys, such as partakers of our board, and

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such as associates in all our fortunes. But as no happiness is permitted long to last, we were at times deprived of the bodily presence of some of these bright lights, when, as justice looked forth from heaven, they were advanced to promotions and dignities in the Church, by which it happened that applying themselves, as behooved them, to their proper cares, they were constrained to absent themselves from our attendance.

And now we will explain the very convenient way by which there came to our hands so great a multitude of books both old and new. The poverty of the religious mendicants, which was undertaken for Christ, has never provoked our fastidious disdain, but, wherever in the world we chanced to be, we admitted them to the sheltering arms of our compassion and by friendly familiarity allured them
69 to a love for our person, and when they were allured, cherished them with a bounteous generosity of beneficence for the love of God. Thus we became the common benefactor of all, yet in such a way that we seemed to have adopted certain ones with a peculiar fatherly love. For them at every time we

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became a place of refuge, and to them we never closed the bosom of our indulgence. Wherefore we deserved to have them as our peculiar favourers and promoters, both in word and work. Traversing sea and land, casting their view over the circuit of the world, and searching the universities and schools of various provinces, they studied to do service for our wishes, for their hope of reward was most certain. What leveret could miss the sight of so many keen-eyed hunters? What fry could escape now their hooks and now their nets and snares?

From the body of the sacred Divine Law up to the quarto of yesterday's sophists, nothing escaped these searchers. If a discourse was uttered at the fountainhead of Christian faith, the ever holy Roman Court, or if some novel question was ventilated in new arguments, if the solidity of Paris, which now leans more to studying antiquity than the discussion of truth with subtlety, or if our Anglican perspicuousness, which, filled with ancient light, ever sends forth new rays of truth, produced aught for the increase of knowledge or the proclamation of the faith, this, while yet fresh, was instantly poured

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into our ears, befouled by no babbler and spoiled by no trifier, but strained most purely from the wine-press it passed to the vats of our memory to be clarified. And when we happened to turn aside to cities and places where the said poor of Christ had their convents, we were not loth to visit their libraries or any other repositories of books. Nay, there we found in their deepest poverty the greatest riches of wisdom treasured up. And in their bags and baskets we discovered not only crumbs falling from the Master's table for the dogs, but the unleavened shewbread and angels' food, having in it all that is delicious, nay, the granaries of Joseph filled with corn, and all the furnishing
71 of Egypt, and the richest gifts that the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon.

These are the ants assiduously gathering food in the harvest and ingenious bees continually fashioning their cells of honey. These are the successors of Bezeleel in devising whatever can be wrought in gold and silver and in gems for adorning the temple of the Church. These are the cunning embroiderers, who make the breastplate and ephod of the

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High Priest, and all the different vestments of the priests. These sew together the curtains of goats' hair and of fine linen and the rams' skins dyed in red, with which to cover the tabernacle of the Church Militant. These are husbandmen ever sowing, oxen that tread out the corn, trumpets that blow, Pleiades that shine, and stars remaining in their courses, that cease not to fight against Sisera. For, to give truth its due, and with prejudice to no one, these, though late in entering the Lord's Vineyard at the eleventh hour, as books, our best lovers, earnestly assured us in the Sixth Chapter above, yet have added more in this short hour to the stock of the sacred books than all the other labourers,—following the footsteps of Paul, who, though last to be called, was foremost in his preaching, and spread⁷² more widely than others the Gospel of Christ.

When we reached the episcopal state we had some of these men from both orders, namely, the Preachers and the Minors, as a support to our sides and table companions in our household; men as distinguished in morals as in letters, and they with unwearied zeal applied themselves to the correcting,

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expounding, collating, and compiling of the various volumes. And though by our manifold intercourse with all the religious we have obtained an abundant store of works, both new and old, yet we extol deservedly with special notice the Preachers in this respect, since we found them free from jealousy in sharing generously their possessions, and imbued with divine liberality, and not avaricious but rightful possessors of luminous wisdom.

Besides all these opportunities set forth above, we obtained the notice of stationers and booksellers not only within the bounds of our native land, but
73 throughout the kingdoms of France and Germany and Italy, for our money flew before us. Nor did any distance stop them, nor any storm at sea deter them, nor did money fail them for their charges, that they should not send or bring to us the books of our desire. They knew full well that their hope resting in our bosom could not fail them, and that there was to be had of us full repayment with usury.

Again, our intercourse, the conqueror of the love of one and all, did not overlook the masters of country schools or the teachers of callow boys; but

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entering their fields and gardens at our leisure, we plucked the fragrant flowers on the surface and digged out forgotten roots, still serviceable to students, and such as might, if their barbarous rankness were extracted, heal their pectoral arteries with the gift of eloquence. Among many things of this sort we found some worthy to be restored to use, and these, when skilfully cleansed of their foul rust and the ghostly mould of age, became fit to be made over again into graceful forms. Applying all the necessary means, we wakened them again after the fashion of the future resurrection, and restored them to life and health. Besides, we have ever⁷⁴ kept in our different manors no small multitude of antiquaries, copyists, correctors, binders, illuminators, and, in general, of all those who could serviceably labour over books.

Finally, all of either sex, and of every estate and condition who had any acquaintance with books, could easily open the door of our hearts by a knock, and obtain a pleasant resting place in the bosom of our favour. So freely did we admit the bearers of books that the multitude of those that had come

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before made us nothing loth for those that came after, nor did the benefit conferred yesterday endanger the favour of to-day. Wherefore, we used alike all the above mentioned persons as lodestones attractive of books, and so there came to us the greatly desired accession of the vessels of wisdom and a multitudinous flight of the best volumes; and this it is that we have undertaken to relate in the present chapter.





NINTH CHAPTER.

That though We Love More the Works of the Ancients yet We Have
not Condemned the Studies of the Moderns.



THOUGH the novelties of the mod- 75
erns have never been distasteful to
us, who have cherished with ever
grateful affection those who had
leisure for study and added to the
opinions of our own forefathers whatever they
could of subtlety or use, yet with more reckless
eagerness have we desired to search through the
perfected labours of the ancients. For, whether
they flourished by nature with a subtler kind of
mind or chanced to indulge in more instant study,
or whether they made their way supported by
the help of both, this one thing we have found
to be evident, that their successors scarce suffice to

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discuss the attainments of those that went before them, or to receive even through a compend of their doctrine what the ancients produced by prolonged investigation. And just as we have read that they surpassed in excellence of body what modern times are known to exhibit, so it is in no wise absurd to think that many of the ancients were eminent for greater brightness of mind, since the works which they did prove each of these alike unattainable by posterity. Hence Phocas writes in the Prologue of his Grammar :

The Ancients all things in their books explore.
Say much in little then : thou canst no more.

And if our discourse turn upon fervour of learning and zeal for study, then it is they who devoted their entire life to philosophy. But our contemporaries in these times, glowing for a few years of fervid youth, in turn devote themselves slothfully to the allurements of vice ; and when their passions are allayed and they have reached the height of discernment for judging between conflicting truths, being entangled in external affairs they

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soon withdraw and bid farewell to the schools of philosophy. They pour out the cloudy must of their youthful minds on the difficulties of philosophy, and bestow the wine which clears more maturely on anxiety in the affairs of this world. Yet more, as Ovid justly complains in the First of his *De Vetula*:

All turn aside to things that make for gain. 77
Few learn; but after wealth all strive amain.
O Virgin Science! they defile thee so:
They shame thee who shouldst chaste embraces know;
Not seeking thee thyself, but gain through thee,
They live for riches, not philosophy.

And again below:

The Love of Wisdom banished,
The Love of Money reigns.

And this, it is clear, is the most violent poison of learning.

That the ancients set none other end to study but life itself is clear by the examples of many, as

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related by Valerius in the Seventh Chapter of his Eighth Book to Tiberius. Carneades, he saith, was long a laborious soldier of philosophy, and when he had finished ninety years the end of philosophizing was still in his eyes the end of life. Isocrates in his ninety-fourth year wrote a most famous book. Sophocles, when well-nigh a hundred years old, and Simonides in his eightieth year wrote poetry.

78 Aulus Gellius professed no desire of living longer than he was fit for writing. So he testifies in the Prologue of the *Noctes Atticæ*. That fervour of study which Euclid, the pupil of Socrates, used to have, Taurus the philosopher was wont to narrate in order to arouse young men to study. According to the account of Aulus Gellius, in the Tenth Chapter of the Sixth Book of the volume we have mentioned, the Athenians, hating the Megarensians, decreed that if any one from Megara entered Athens he should be put to death. At that time Euclid, who was a Megarensian and before the decree had been a hearer of Socrates, went by night disguised in woman's clothing from Megara to Athens, a distance of twenty miles, to hear

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Socrates and returned again. Rash and extreme was the zeal of Archimedes, the lover of geometry, who refused to give his name or to raise his head from the figure drawn before him, by which act he could have lengthened the space of his mortal life; but caring more for study than for life, he dyed the figure of his studies with his blood.

Very many are the examples of this our proposition, and the brevity we have professed permits us not even to run through them. But, sad to say, ⁷⁹ the clerks who are famous in these days walk in a far different way. Suffering from ambition in their tender years and fastening insecurely on their untried arms the Icarean wings of presumption, being still ungrown they seize the master's hood and while but boys become unworthy professors of the various faculties, through which they pass not step by step, but ascend by leaps after the manner of goats. When they have but tasted of the great stream they think they have drained it to the bottom, whereas their throats are hardly wet. And because they were not established on the right foundation of the first rudiments at a suitable

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time, they rear a tottering building, and now that they are grown up, are ashamed to learn what it became them to learn when young. And so, indeed, they are ever compelled to suffer, because overhastily they made a leap at dignities beyond their desert. For these and like causes scholastic tyros have not that solidness of learning which the ancients had; nor by their trifling little studies do they attain it, howsoever they may be settled in office, awarded titles, authorized by their robes, and be solemnly seated in the chairs of their elders.

Scarce taken from the cradle and hastily weaned,
80 they skim through the rules of Priscian and Donatus. As yet ungrown and beardless, they reëcho with childish stammering the Categories and the Perihermenias, in the writing of which the great Aristotle is said to have dipped his pen in his own heart. Making their way through these studies with wasteful haste and a worthless diploma, they lay violent hands on holy Moses, and, sprinkling their faces with dark waters and clouds of the air, prepare for the mitre of a bishop a head yet un-

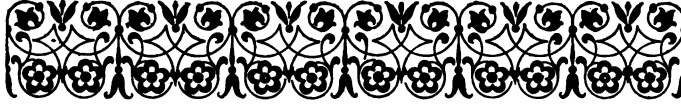
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honoured with the whiteness of old age. This pest is greatly helped and advanced to this fantastic clerkship, which is attained by such wanton steps, by the papal provision which is secured through seductive entreaties, yea, also, entreaties from potentates and cardinals that cannot be rejected, and by the avarice of friends and parents, who build up Zion in their own blood by seizing the preferments of the Church for their nephews and pupils before they are duly seasoned by the course of nature or of learning. Alas! by this same infliction which we deplore do we behold the Palladium of Paris removed in these sad times. There the zeal of that noble school, whose rays once gave light to every corner of the world, hath now become lukewarm, yea, hath almost frozen. There the pen of every scribe is now at rest, nor is the making of books continued any longer, and there is none who begins to be reckoned as a new author. They involve sentences in unskilful style of speech and have lost all aptness in logic, save that they stealthily betake themselves to the Anglican subtleties which they openly revile.

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The admirable Minerva seems to have traversed the nations of men from end to end of the world, bravely touching on each that she might give herself to all. Already do we see that she has passed away from the Indians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and the Greeks, the Arabians and the Latins. Already has she forsaken Athens, departed from Rome, passed by Paris, and is happily come to Britain, the noblest of islands, nay, the very microcosm, that she may show herself debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians. From this wonder it is plainly conjectured by many that even as the learning of France is now become lukewarm, so her soldiery is weakened and unmanly.





TENTH CHAPTER.

Of the Successive Perfecting of Books.



WHILE diligently seeking after the 82
wisdom of the ancients according to
the counsel of the Wise Man in the
Thirty-ninth of Ecclesiasticus,—The
wise man, saith he, will seek out the
wisdom of all the ancients,—yet we have not thought
it right to be led aside so far in our opinions as to
say that the first founders of the arts have purged out
all crudity. For we know well that the discovery
of every one, when tested by a sound rule, adds
a trifling portion to science, and that the unwearied
investigations of many, as though the symbols of
knowledge were furnished to men one by one, have
swollen the great body of knowledge by successive
increase to the vast proportions which we behold.

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For the disciples, continually melting down as in a furnace the teachings of their masters, have burned out the dross that had been neglected before, until
83 there came out refined gold, tried in the furnace, purified seven times and perfect, alloyed by no admixture of error or of doubt. Not even Aristotle, who flourished with the mind of a giant, in whom it pleased nature to try how much of reason could be joined to mortality, and whom the Most High honoured but a little less than the angels, sucked from his fingers those wondrous volumes which the whole world can scarcely contain. Nay, on the contrary, with the sharp sight of a lynx he had seen through the sacred books of the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Persians also and the Medes; for all these versatile Greece had transferred to her own treasures. Receiving their sayings that were rightly spoken, he smoothed down the rough, cut away the superfluous, supplied the lacking, and blotted out the erroneous. He thought also that thanks were due not only to those who taught with sincerity, but even to those who erred, inasmuch as they pointed out that there was a

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better way for inquiring after truth, as he himself clearly teaches in the Second of his *Metaphysics*. Thus have many learned counsellors contributed to the *Pandects* and many physicians to the *Tegni*, and in this way *Avicenna* edited the *Canon* and *Pliny* his massive work on *Natural History* and *Ptolemy* the *Almagest*.

Now as in the writers of annals it is not hard to ⁸⁴ perceive that the later writer always presupposes the former, without whom he would in no wise be able to relate the events of the past, even so we must judge in regard to the authors of the sciences. For no one alone ever created any science, and yet, between the earliest authors and the latest, we find those who are intermediate. They are old, indeed, if compared with our times, but new if referred to the founding of studies; and such we judge to be the most learned. What would *Virgil*, the most excellent poet of the Latins, have done had he not plundered *Theocritus*, *Lucretius*, and *Homer*, and plowed with their heifer? What, indeed, had he not in some wise read again and again *Parthenius* and *Pindar*, whose eloquence he could in no other

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way have rivalled? What would Sallust and Tully and Boethius and Macrobius and Lactantius and Martianus, nay, the whole cohort of the Latins generally, have done had they not looked into the studies of Athens and the volumes of the Greeks? Little indeed would Jerome, though skilled in the
85 three tongues, or Ambrose or Augustine, who yet confesses that he hated Greek literature, or even Gregory, who states that he was utterly ignorant of it, have accomplished for the learning of the Church had not Greece, yet more learned, supplied them from her stores. And Rome, watered by her stream, as formerly she produced philosophers after the likeness of the Greeks, in like fashion afterwards produced writers of treatises on the orthodox faith. The creeds we chant are the sweatings of the Greeks, proclaimed in their councils and established by the martyrdom of many. Yet it happens that the natural slowness of the Latins makes for their glory, for even as they were less learned in studies, so were they less wicked in their errors. The Arian malice had eclipsed almost the whole Church; the Nestorian

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wickedness, which in its blasphemous raving stopped not at railing at the Virgin, would have taken away both the name and the definition *Theotokos*, or Mother of God, from the Queen of Heaven, not by assaulting her but by disputing, had not the invincible soldier Cyril, ready to do single combat, wholly snuffed it out by the vehemence of his spirit with the favouring help of the Council of Ephesus. Past numbering on our part are both the forms and authors of the Greek heresies. For as they were⁸⁶ the first cultivators of our most holy faith, so also are they related in faithful histories to be the first sowers of tares. Thus more and more they advanced toward the worse. For while they strove to part the seamless vesture, they totally lost the purity of doctrine given them at the first, and, blinded by new darkness, are fallen into the bottomless abyss, unless He whose wisdom number cannot reckon shall dispense of His secret power for their salvation.

But enough of this; for here the power of judging fails us. One thing only we deduce from what we have said, namely, that ignorance of the Greek

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tongue is to-day most injurious to Latin studies. For without this the opinions of the ancient writers, whether Christians or Gentiles, cannot be comprehended. We must judge the same regarding Arabic in respect to many treatises on astronomy, and regarding Hebrew so far as concerns the text of the Holy Bible. For these defects Clement the Fifth makes provision, if only the bishops would faithfully observe what they so easily enact. Wherefore we have made it our care to provide for our scholars both a Greek and a Hebrew grammar, with certain
87 additions by whose aid studious readers may be well informed for the writing and the reading of these tongues as well as for their understanding, although only the hearing of the ear may represent to the mind the true propriety of their speech.





ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Why We Have Preferred the Books of the Liberal Arts before the
Books of Law.



THE lucrative practice of the law, intended for the settling of earthly affairs, the more it is found useful to the children of this world the less does it confer on the children of light for grasping the mysteries of Holy Scripture and the secret sacraments of the faith, because it especially disposes unto the friendship of the world, through which, as James testifieth, a man is made the enemy of God. And no doubt human strife, the offspring of unbounded avarice, is oftener extended than extinguished by intricate laws, which can be construed in both directions. And yet it is well known that laws emanated from learned lawyers 88

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and pious princes to assuage this strife. Clearly, then, as the same branch of science may deal with contraries and the power of reason avails for opposite conclusions, and at the same time human nature is prone to evil, it happens with those who put in exercise this faculty of law that they indulge more in stirring up strife than bringing about peace; and they do not bring the law to bear according to the intent of the lawgiver, but violently twist the meaning of words to the effecting of their own devices.

Wherefore, although a deep love of books possessed our mind from boyhood, and we regarded our longing desire for them as better than any pleasure, yet an appetite for the books of civil law did not greatly stir our affections, and we granted for the gathering of such volumes but little labour and expense. Yet they are useful, as is the scorpion in treacle, as Aristotle, the sun of learning, has remarked concerning logic in his book *De Pomo*. We soon perceived that there was a certain manifest difference of nature between law and science. For every science has its satisfaction and delight in opening its very vitals to display the heart of its

Books of the Arts and Books of Law.

principles, that the roots of its growth may be disclosed and the flowing of its springs be clearly seen; for thus, from the harmonious and blended light of the truth of conclusions drawn from principles, the whole body of science itself becomes lucid, having no part or lot with darkness. But laws, on the other hand, since they are but human agreements and enactments for living in civil society, or else the yokes of princes set upon the necks of their subjects, refuse to be reduced to *synteresis*, or the first principles of justice, from the misgiving that they embody more of arbitrary will than of rational judgment. Wherefore the opinion of wise men inclines us to believe, in the main, that the principles of law are not a subject for discussion. In sooth, many laws acquire vigour by custom alone and not by logical necessity as do the arts. So Aristotle, the Phœbus of his school, instructs us in the Second of his Politics, where he refutes the polity of Hippodamus, which offered rewards to inventors of new laws; because to abolish old laws and establish new ones is to weaken the laws that are in force.

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For things that gain their strength from custom only must needs fall away from disuse.

90 From these things it is sufficiently clear that as laws are neither arts nor sciences, so the books of law cannot properly be called books of art or science; nor is this faculty to which we give, by an appropriate term, the name *geology*, or the science of earthly things, to be reckoned among the sciences. But books of the liberal arts are so useful for Holy Scripture that without their aid the intellect would aspire in vain to understand it.





TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Why We Have Taken Such Diligent Care to Amend
the Books of Grammar.



WHILE continually refreshing ourselves by the reading of books, which it was our custom to read or to hear every day, we noticed clearly how much the action of the intellect is impeded by the imperfect knowledge of even one word, for the sense of no utterance is understood whose slightest part is unknown. Wherefore we were at special pains to order explanations of exotic words to be recorded, and gave consideration with constant watchfulness to the orthography, the prosody, the etymology, and the syntax of the ancient grammarians, and terms whose meaning had become obscure by great age we took care to

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explain by suitable descriptions, to the end that we might make ready a smooth path for our students. This is, in truth, the sum total of the reason why we have made it our care to renew the antiquated volumes of the grammarians by making improved copies. It was to open royal roads over which our scholars might advance without stumbling to all arts whatsoever.





THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Why We Have not Wholly Neglected the Fables of the Poets.



ALL the kinds of assaults which lovers⁹² of naked truth hurl against the poets are to be warded off with a double shield, either by the reason that in an unbecoming theme a pleasing style of speech may be learned, or that when a fictitious but becoming theme is being handled, natural or historical truth is aimed at under the guise of figurative invention. Now though all men doubtless naturally desire knowledge, yet all do not equally delight in learning; nay, indeed, when the toil of study is once tasted and the fatigue of the senses comes to be perceived, very

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many thoughtlessly throw away the nut before the shell is broken and the kernel obtained.

Man has born within him a double love, namely, of his own freedom as against control and of a certain pleasure in his work. Hence no one without cause puts himself under the control of others or of his own accord pursues any work which he dislikes. For pleasure perfects labour, even as beauty crowns youth, as Aristotle most truly inculcates in the Tenth of his Ethics. For this end, therefore, did the prudence of the ancients invent a device by which the wanton disposition of man might be captured, as it were, by a pious snare, and the dainty Minerva be concealed behind the mask of pleasure. We are wont to allure young children by gifts that they may willingly learn those things to which we force them to apply themselves though unwilling. For our depraved nature does not move toward the virtues with that same zeal with which it casts itself headlong into vice. Horace, in his *Ars Poetica*, declares this to us in a short verse, speaking as follows:

Poets all seek to profit or delight.

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Again, in another verse of the same book, he plainly insinuates the same thing, writing as follows:

He carries every point who mingles joy and use.

How many pupils of Euclid has the Elefuga thrown back as though it were a steep and jutting cliff that could be scaled by no help of ladders! 94 This is an hard saying, they say; who can hear it? The son of inconstancy, who at last wished that he might be changed into an ass, peradventure would never have given up the study of philosophy had it come to meet him in a friendly way, clad in the robe of pleasure; but soon, smitten dumb by the chair of Crato and stricken by endless questions as by a sudden bolt of lightning, he saw no refuge anywhere save in flight.

Such is our argument in defence of the poets, and we now proceed to show that those who study them with due regard are to be held blameless. Now the ignorance of only one word may hinder the understanding of the longest sentence, as is shown in the last chapter. Since, then, the sayings of the saints often refer to the inventions of

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the poets, it must needs happen that if the poem in question be unknown, the whole intent of the author is utterly obscured. Surely, then, as Cassiodorus says in his book on the Institutes of Sacred Letters, those things are not to be reckoned small without which great things cannot exist. It follows, therefore, that if the poets are unknown, then also
98 Jerome is unknown, and Augustine, and Boethius, and Lactantius, and Sidonius, and many others whose praises the longest chapter would not suffice to declare.

The Venerable Bede has clearly discussed this point of doubt in a lucid distinction, as is recited by his compiler, the great Gratian, that repeater of many authors who was so eager in the gathering of his material and so confused in its arrangement. He writes thus, however, in his Thirty-seventh Distinction headed *Turbat acumen*: Secular literature is read by some for pleasure, because they delight in the inventions of the poets and the elegance of their language. But others read them for learning, that, from this reading, they may thoroughly detest the errors of the heathen, and apply the use-

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ful things they discover in them to the purpose of holy and devout edification. Such as these laudably read secular literature. Thus far Bede.

Warned by this wholesome instruction, let the detractors of those who study the poets from henceforth hold their peace, nor let those who are ignorant of things of this sort desire others to be ignorant as well; for this is like seeking a consolation for their own misfortune. Let every one, then, encourage in himself desires governed by pious intent, and in any subject whatsoever, if he regard the conditions of virtue, he may make a study acceptable unto God. And if he have found profit in a poet, even in the way the great Maro confesses to have done in Ennius, he has not failed.





FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who Ought to Be the Especial Lovers of Books.



O one who recalls what has been said above, it is plain and clear who ought to be preëminently the lovers of books. Whosoever need wisdom most for performing serviceably the duties of their own state, these doubtless are held especially bound to display a warmer anxiety and gratitude of heart toward the sacred vessels of wisdom. Now it is the mark of a wise man to order well both himself and others, as Aristotle, the Phœbus of philosophers, who deceives not nor is deceived in human things, teaches in the opening
97 of his *Metaphysics*. Wherefore, princes and bishops, judges and doctors, and all rulers of the commonwealth, inasmuch as they have need of wisdom

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beyond other men, ought also to have zeal beyond others for the vessels of wisdom.

Philosophy was seen in a vision by Boethius, holding a sceptre in her left hand and books in her right, by which it is plainly shown to all that no one can justly rule a commonwealth without books. Thou, saith Boethius speaking to Philosophy, hast sanctioned this sentence by the mouth of Plato, that commonwealths would be happy, if either the students of philosophy should rule them or their rulers should chance to study philosophy. The very bearing of the figure suggests this to us, for inasmuch as the right hand is better than the left, so much is the contemplative worthier than the active, and at the same time it is shown that it concerns a wise man to devote himself in turn now to the study of truth and now to the governance of temporal things.

We read that Philip devoutly returned thanks to the gods because they had allowed Alexander to be born in the times of Aristotle, under whose instruction he was trained to become worthy the rule of his father's kingdom. For when Phaeton,

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“ unskilled in driving, becomes the charioteer of his father's car, first by excessive nearness and then by his extreme remoteness he dispenses unpleasantly the heat of Phoebus to mortals, and so, lest all below him should be put in peril by his close driving, he justly deserves death by lightning. The histories both of the Greeks and the Latins relate that their princes who lacked skill in letters were not reckoned noble. The sacred Law of Moses, enjoining on the king the rule by which he should reign, instructs him in the Seventeenth of Deuteronomy to have written out for himself the book of the Divine Law, according to the copy shown him by the priests, and in this he was to read all the days of his life. Surely, the forgetfulness of human memory and the weakness of virtuous desires in man were well known to God Himself, who hath created and who daily fashioneth the hearts of all alike. Therefore, He has willed that books should be, as it were, an antidote for all evil, and hath enjoined their reading and use as the most wholesome daily food of the soul, that, when the intellect is refreshed by this, it need never tremble from

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weakness or doubt in any question of duty. This matter is elegantly treated of by John of Salisbury in his *Polieration*, the Fourth Book. 99

Finally, all kinds of men who are made conspicuous by the tonsure or by the clerical name, against whom books made their complaint in our Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Chapters, are held bound to serve books with perpetual reverence.





FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

What Benefits the Love of Books Confers.



I passeth human genius, howsoever deeply it has quaffed from the fount of Pegasus, perfectly to unfold the title of the present chapter. Yea, though one spoke with the tongues of men and of angels, were transformed into a Mercury or a Tully, or grew sweet with the milky eloquence of Livy, or discoursed with the charm of Demosthenes, yet will he allege the stammering of Moses, or with Jeremiah will confess that he is yet a child and knows not how to speak, or will imitate
100 Echo repeating the sound in the lofty mountains. Now we proved in the Second Chapter that the love of books is in truth the love of wisdom. This love we name Philosophy, from a Greek word, and its

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virtue no created intelligence comprehends, for it is believed to be in truth the mother of all good things (the Seventh of Wisdom). Like a heavenly dew it extinguishes the heats of carnal vice, while the intense activity of the spiritual virtues weakens the strength of the natural virtues, and indolence is wholly driven out, and this driven out, every shaft of Cupid fails.

Hence Plato in his *Phaedo* says: In this a philosopher is known, if he severs the soul from its communion with the body differently from other men. Love the knowledge of the Scriptures, saith Jerome, and thou shalt not love the vices of the flesh. The god-like Xenocrates showed this in the constancy of his reason, whom the notable strumpet Phryne declared to be a statue and not a man, when she could not effeminate him by any of her allurements, as Valerius fully describes in the Third Chapter of his Fourth Book. Our own Origen showed this also, for, lest he should happen to be tempted by omnipotent woman, he chose a mean between both 101 sexes, by mutilating himself. A fierce remedy, indeed, and one consistent neither with nature nor

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with virtue, whose office is not to make men insensible to their passions, but to slay those that spring from instinct with the sword of reason.

Moreover, as many as the love of books doth affect think little of the world, as Jerome saith in his Fifty-fourth letter against Vigilantius: It is not the business of the same man to be a judge of both money and writings. Hence also a certain writer has spoken thus in verse:

Unfit for handling volumes are hands with rusty stain,
Nor hearts by money hardened can place for books contain.
As there is none suffices both books and gold to test,
Thy school, O Epicurus, for books alone hath zest.

Gold-seekers and book-lovers together cannot thrive:
No single roof, believe me, to both can shelter give.

No man, therefore, can serve both books and Mammon.

The ugliness of vice is greatly reprobated in books, and he who loves to search through them
102 will be induced to detest it utterly. The demon who takes his name from knowledge is led in triumph especially by the knowledge that comes from

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books; and through books his manifold tortuous deceits and his thousand perverse ways are laid open to readers, lest, transforming himself into an angel of light, he should deceive the innocent by his wiles. A reverence for divine things is revealed to us by books and the virtues by which it is fostered are openly declared, and our reward is set before us on the promise of undeceived and undeceiving truth. The image likeliest to our future blessedness is the contemplation of sacred letters, in which we behold now the Creator and now the creature, and draw water from the river of eternal joy. Faith is established by the power of letters, hope is strengthened by the consolation of books, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope. Charity is not puffed up but edified by a true knowledge of letters; nay, it is as clear as light that the Church itself is established on the sacred books. Books delight us when prosperity sweetly smiles; they stay to comfort us when cloudy fortune frowns. They lend strength to human compacts, and without them grave judgments may not be propounded.

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- 103 The arts and sciences, whose advantages no mind is sufficient to tell, depend upon books. How highly must we reckon their marvellous power, since by means of them we view the boundaries of the world and of time, and, as in a mirror of eternity, behold the things that are not as those that are! In books we scale the mountains; we search the deep gulfs of the abysses; we behold the finny tribes which the common air can in no way contain alive. We distinguish the properties of streams and springs of different lands, and out of books we dig the various kinds of metals and of gems, and the ore of every mineral. We learn the virtues of plants and trees and shrubs, and view at will all the progeny of Neptune, of Ceres, and of Pluto. And if it delight us to visit the inhabitants of heaven, betaking ourselves to Taurus, Caucasus, or Olympus, we pass beyond the realms of Juno and measure out the sevenfold territory of the planets with curves and circles. At last we behold the lofty firmament on high, pictured in endless variety with signs and degrees and figures. There we look upon the Ant-
- 104 arctic Pole, whose turning neither eye has seen nor ear has heard, and behold with delectable joy the

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shining Milky Way, and the Zodiac pictured with celestial animals. Passing thence, we cross by means of books to the separate substances, that the intellect may salute its kindred intelligences and behold with the eye of the spirit the First Cause of all things, the Unmoved Mover of infinite power, and be filled with love without end. Lo! by the aid of books, we attain the reward of our final happiness while we are yet pilgrims. And what more? Assuredly, as we have learned from the teaching of Seneca, indolence without letters is death and the burial of the living man. And so, arguing from the opposite, we conclude that occupation with letters or books is the life of man.

Again, through books we give intimation both to friend and foe of what we could never so securely entrust to messengers; for there is granted an entrance for books even to the bedchamber of princes, where the voice of the living author would be repelled, as Tertullian saith in the beginning of his Apologeticus. Under guard, in prison and in chains, and wholly deprived of freedom of body, we make use of the embassies of books to our friends, and to them we commit the furthering of our cause 105

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and send them thither where entrance on our part would be the occasion of our death. By books we call to mind the past, we prophesy in some manner of the future, and by the remembrance of writing we strengthen the present, which ever flows and glides away. The felicitous studiousness and studious felicity of the mighty eunuch, described in the Eighth of Acts, whom the love of reading the prophets had inflamed so greatly that he ceased not from his reading by reason of his journey, caused him to forget the populous palace of Queen Candace, removed from his heart the care of the treasure over which he was placed, and made him neglect both his way and his chariot. The love of a book alone had wholly occupied this dwelling place of chastity, and soon by its guidance he won his way to an entrance through the door of faith. O glorious love of books, which through baptismal grace made the son of Gehenna and child of Tartarus a son of the Kingdom!

Let the impotent pen now cease to pursue the tenor of this infinite business, lest it may seem to attempt rashly what in the beginning we confessed was impossible for any one.



SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

How Worthy a Task It Is to Write New Books and Repair Old Ones.



AS it is necessary for a commonwealth 106
to provide armour of Vulcan for
its soldiers going to war and to pre-
pare gathered stores of supplies,
so is it clearly worth the while
of the Church Militant that it should be defended
by a multitude of wholesome books against the
assault of Pagans and Heretics. But as everything
that gives service to mortals suffers the penalty
of mortality by the lapse of time, it is needful
to replace volumes that are worn out by old age
with new successors, that the perpetuity which
nature refuses to the individual may be granted
as a privilege to the race. Hence it is, as the
Twelfth of Ecclesiasticus notably says: Of mak-
ing many books there is no end. For as the bodies

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¹⁰⁷ of books, made of a mixture of contraries, must experience a continuous wasting of their elements, so by the wisdom of clerks there ought to be found a remedy by which a sacred book, after paying the debt of nature, may obtain a substitute by inheritance, and thus a like seed be raised up to the dead brother, and that saying in the Thirtieth of Ecclesiasticus be proved true: The father is dead, and he is as if he were not dead, for he hath left one behind him that is like himself. So then the transcribers of old books are, as it were, begetters of new sons, on whom is devolved the duty of the fathers, that the estate of books suffer no loss. Transcribers of this kind of knowledge are called Antiquaries, and their pursuits Cassiodorus confesses pleased him beyond other things which are achieved by bodily labour. He thus writes in the Thirtieth Chapter of his Institutes of Divine Letters: Happy intention! praiseworthy zeal! to preach to men with the hand, to open their tongues with the fingers, silently to give safety to mortals, and to combat with pen and ink the impious wiles of the Devil! So Cassiodorus writes. Moreover,

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our Saviour performed the office of a writer when, bending Himself downward, He wrote with His finger on the earth (the Eighth of John), that no one, howsoever noble, should henceforth disdain to do this which he sees the very Wisdom of God the Father to have done. O peculiar serenity of writing, to whose making the Architect of the world bends down,—He at whose dread name every knee doth bow! O venerable craft, marvellous beyond all other handiwork, to which the breast of the Lord is humbly bowed, to which the finger of God is applied, taking the place of a pen! We do not read that the Son of God sowed or plowed, or that He wove or digged. Nor was aught else of the mechanical arts becoming to the Divine Wisdom made human, except marking out letters in writing; that every one of gentle birth and every sciolist may learn that fingers are given to men by God rather for the business of writing than for use in war. Hence we greatly approve that opinion of books, in which they judged the clerk ignorant of writing to be in some fashion maimed. See the Sixth Chapter above.

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God Himself writes the names of the just in the Book of Life. Moses received tables of stone written by the finger of God. Let him that judgeth
109 me, write a book, proclaims Job. Nebuchadnezzar saw with trembling the fingers of one writing on the wall, *Mene, Tekel, Phares* (the Fifth of Daniel). I, said Jeremiah, in the Thirty-sixth of Jeremiah, wrote with ink in a book. What thou seest, write in a book, saith Christ in the First of the Apocalypse to John, His beloved disciple. The office of a writer is enjoined on Isaiah and on Joshua, that this act and practice may be commended to posterity. Christ Himself hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, that without writing the royal apparel of the Almighty may not appear perfect. They who have written the books of science cease not to teach though dead. Paul availed more for the edifying of the Church by writing his holy epistles than by preaching the Gospel by word of mouth both to Jews and Gentiles. Yea, the obtainer of the prize daily continues in books what he began to learn while yet a sojourner on the

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earth, and thus is verified concerning the wise who write books the prophetic word of the Twelfth of Daniel : They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Furthermore, it is taught by Catholic doctors that the longevity of the ancients, before God destroyed the original world with the flood, should be ascribed to a miracle and not to nature, on the ground that God Himself granted them so much life as was needed for discovering the sciences and for writing books. Among these the wondrous diversity of astronomy required, according to Josephus, a period of six hundred years, that it might be submitted to experimental observation. However, they do not refuse to believe that the fruits of the earth in that early time yielded a better food for mortals than the moderns obtain. By this, moreover, there was granted them not only a sounder health of body but also a longer flower of life, to which it contributed in no light degree that they lived for virtue and pruned away wholly the superfluities of pleasure. Accordingly, whoever is endowed with knowledge by the gift of God, following the counsel

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of the Holy Ghost in the Thirty-eighth of Ecclesiasticus: Let him write wisdom in his time of leisure. So shall his reward be with the blessed, and the space of his life be lengthened in this present world.

If now we turn aside our discourse to the princes
of the world, we discover famous commanders,
111 who flourished not only in skill in writing, but
often indulged in its practice. Julius Cæsar, the
first and foremost of them all, left behind him
Commentaries on the Gallic and the Civil War,
both written by himself. Also his two books on
Analogy, the same number of Anticatones, and a
poem which is entitled The Journey, with many
other lesser works. Both Julius and Augustus
invented a way of writing one letter for another,
so as to conceal what they wrote; Julius placing
the fourth letter instead of the first, and so passing
through the alphabet, and Augustus putting the
second for the first, and the third for the second;
and such was the practice thereafter. In the midst
of the Mutinensian war, in the thick of perilous
affairs, he is said to have read and written and

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even recited every day. Tiberius wrote a song and some Greek poetry. Claudius, likewise, who was skilled both in the Latin and the Greek tongue, wrote various books. Titus, however, flourished beyond these and others in his skill in writing, since he imitated easily any letter he would, and on this account professed that, had it pleased him, he could have become a remarkable forger. All ¹¹² these things are noted by Suetonius in his Lives of the Twelve Cæsars.





SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Of Showing Honourable Respect in the Care of Books.



NOT only do we offer a service to God in preparing new volumes, but practice a duty of sacred piety, if we handle them without injury and commit them when returned to their proper places to an inviolable custody, that they may rejoice in their purity while held in our hands and rest in security when laid away in their own couches. No doubt, next after the vestments and vessels dedicated to the body of the Lord, sacred books deserve honourable handling from the clergy ; for an injury is done so often as an unclean hand
¹¹³ presumes to touch them. Wherefore, we think it expedient to exhort our students regarding various negligences, which might always be easily avoided

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and which do marvellous harm to books. First, then, let there be considerate moderation in the opening and shutting of books, that they be not opened in headlong haste nor, when our inspection is ended, be thrown away without being duly closed. For we ought to care far more diligently for a book than for a boot. But the race of scholars is commonly educated badly and, unless it be bridled in by the rules of its elders, becomes accustomed to endless childishness. They are moved by petulance; they swell with presumptuousness; they give judgment as though certain of everything, whereas they are expert in nothing.

You shall chance to see some stiff-necked youth sluggishly seating himself for study, and while the frost is sharp in the winter time, his nose, all watery with the biting cold, begins to drip. Nor does he deign to wipe it with his cloth until he has wet the book'spread out before him with the vile dew. Would that such an one were given in place of a book a cobbler's apron! He has a nail almost as black as jet and reeking with foul filth, and with this he marks the place of any matter that pleaseth 114

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him. He sorts out innumerable straws which he sets in divers places, evidently that the mark may bring back to him what his memory cannot hold. These straws, because the stomach of the book does not digest them and no one takes them out, at first distend it beyond its wonted place of closing, and at length, being quite overlooked, begin to rot. He halts not at eating fruits and cheese over the open page, and in a slovenly way shifts his cup hither and thither. And because he has not his alms-bag at hand, he casts the residue of the fragments into the book. With endless chattering he ceases not to rail against his companions and, while adducing a multitude of reasons void of all sensible meaning, wets the book spread out in his lap with the sputtering of his spittle. And what shall I say more? Soon doubling his elbows he reclines upon the book and by his short study invites a long sleep, and by spreading out the wrinkles bends the margins of the leaves to the no small harm of the volume.

And now the rain is over and gone, and the flowers have appeared on the earth. Then the

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scholar whom we are describing, a neglecter rather than an inspector of books, will stuff his book with the violet, the primrose and the rose, yea, also with the quatrefoil. Then he will apply his watery hands, all damp with sweat, to turning over the volumes; then will he pound upon the white parchment with his gloves filled with dust from everywhere, and with his finger gloved in long-used leather will hunt over the page line by line. Then, at the nip of the biting flea, the holy book is flung aside, and is scarcely shut within a month, but becomes so swollen with the dust that has fallen in it, that it cannot obey the effort of one who would close it. 115

Especially, moreover, must we restrain from handling books those impudent youths, who, when they have learned to draw the shapes of letters, soon begin, if opportunity be granted them, to be uncouth scribblers on the best volumes, and, where they see some larger margin about the text, make a show with monstrous letters, and if any other triviality whatsoever occurs to their imagination their unchastened pen hastens at once to draw it out. There the Latinist and the sophister and every

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unlearned scribe proves the goodness of his pen ;
a thing which we have seen to be too often inju-
116 rious to the best of books, both as concerns their
usefulness and their price.

There are also certain thieves who make terrible
havoc by cutting off the side strips as paper for
writing their letters, leaving only the written text,
or they turn to various abuses the fly leaves which
are bound in for the protection of the book. This
sort of sacrilege ought to be prohibited under pain
of anathema.

It greatly suits with the honourable behaviour of
scholars that so often as they return after eating to
their study a washing should always precede their
reading. Nor should a finger smeared with grease
turn over the leaves or loosen the clasps of the
book. Let no crying child admire the pictures in
the capital letters, lest he defile the parchment with
his wet hand, for he touches instantly whatever he
sees. Laymen, moreover, who look in the same
way at a book lying upside down as when it is
open in its natural way, are wholly unworthy the
intercourse of books. Let the clerk see to this

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also that no dirty scullion greasy from his pots and yet unwashed shall touch the lilies of the books; but he that walketh without blemish shall minister to the precious volumes. Again, a becoming cleanness of hands would add much both to books and to scholars, if the itch and pimples were not marks of the clergy. As often as defects of books are noticed, we must quickly run to mend them, for nothing lengthens faster than a slit, and a rent which is neglected at the time will be repaired afterwards with usury. 117

Moses, the meekest of men, instructs us in the Thirty-first of Deuteronomy how to make in a becoming way book-shelves for books, where they may be kept safe from all injury. Take, saith he, this book and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. O fitting place and seemly library! made of imperishable Shittim-wood and overlaid round about with gold without and within! But all unfitting neglect in handling books is excluded by the example of our Saviour Himself, as we read in the Fourth of Luke. For when He had read the prophetic scripture concern-

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ing Himself in the book that was handed Him, He
did not give back the book to the minister until He
118 had closed it with His own most sacred hands. By
this students are taught most clearly that not even
that which is least in the care of books should be
neglected.





EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

That We Have Gathered Such a Multitude of Books for the Common Advantage of Scholars, and not Only for Our Own Pleasure.



NOTHING more unjust is to be found among men than that those things which are performed justly are perverted by the slanders of the malignant. And so one endures the reproach of a sin where rather he has a right to look for honour. Many a thing is done with single eye, nor does the left hand disclose itself to the right, the lump is corrupted by no leaven, nor is the garment woven of woollen and linen, and yet by the arts of perverse men a pious work is deceitfully transformed into something monstrous. It is no doubt the reprobate condition of our sinful nature that, not alone in deeds that are morally doubtful, 119

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it inclines to the worse construction, but oftentimes depraves by a wicked interpretation those things that bear the aspect of uprightness. For although the love of books by a clerk seems honourable from the very nature of the object, yet in some marvellous way it exposed us to the condemnation of many, through whose open amazement we were thought ill of, now for our superfluity of curiosity, now for our greediness in material things, now for our appearance of vanity, and now we were censured for the intemperateness of our love for letters. And indeed their revilings moved us no more than the barking of little dogs, being content by His witness alone, to whom the heart and the reins are open to be searched. For, since the final intent of a secret desire lies hidden from men and is open only to God, the Inspector of hearts, they deserve to be rebuked for their perverse temerity in that they so easily write a sinister inscription over human actions whose fontal principle they cannot see. For the intent in matters of conduct holds the same place as principles in speculation, or as suppositions in mathematics, as

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witness the prince of philosophers in the Seventh of his Ethics. Wherefore, just as the truth of a conclusion appears from the evidence in the premises, so oftentimes in matters of conduct moral excellence is stamped on a deed by the intent of an honest purpose, where otherwise the deed itself should be judged indifferent, so far as concerns morals. ¹²⁰

We, however, while yet awaiting a suitable time under God, have long cherished within our heart a deeply-rooted intention of founding as a perpetual charity and endowing with the necessary revenues a Hall in the reverend University of Oxford, the chief nurse of all the liberal arts, and to supply it, when occupied by numerous scholars, with the treasures of our books, that each and all of our books may become common, so far as pertains to their use in study, not only to the scholars of the said Hall, but through them to all the students of the above-named University forever, after the form and manner which the following chapter will declare. Wherefore, a sincere love of study and zeal for confirming the orthodox faith to the edifying of

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the Church have begotten in us this anxiety so amazing to the lovers of money. Hence, careless of expense, we gathered books wherever they were to be sold, and where they were not to be bought, we had them fairly copied.

121 Now the tastes of men are variously determined according to the influence of the heavenly bodies to which the mixed composition of our nature is often obedient. Hence, some choose to give themselves to architecture and others to husbandry, and others again to hunting, or navigation, or war, or sports. Thus, under the influence of Mercury, books became the object of our honourable desire, and this we have directed under the auspices of right reason, over which no stars hold sway, to the honour of the Supreme Majesty, that where our mind found the tranquillity of peace, there the worship of God might most devoutly arise.

Then let our detractors cease. Let not the blind presume to judge of colours, nor bats to cavil at the light, nor those that have beams in their own eyes to pluck out motes from the eyes of others. Let those cease defaming that of which they are

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ignorant and discussing hidden things that are not open to human search, who haply would have commended us with a friendly affection had we given our leisure to hunting wild beasts, or throwing dice, or to courting the favours of mistresses.





NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Of the Manner of Distributing our Books to All Students.

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It hath always been difficult so to limit men by the laws of honesty that the knavery of a succeeding generation should not strive to overleap the limits set by a preceding one and break established rules through wanton insolence. Accordingly, following the advice of prudent men, we have devised beforehand a fixed plan according to which it is our will that the communication and use of our books shall be allowed for the advantage of students.

First, then, we give and grant our books one and all, of which we have made a special catalogue, in consideration of affection, to the company of scholars dwelling in *N. Hall* in Oxford, as a per-

Distribution of Our Books.

petual alms-deed for our own soul and for the souls of our parents, as well as for the souls of the most illustrious King of England, Edward, the Third since the Conquest, and his consort, the most devout lady, Queen Philippa, that the said books may be lent out for a time to one and all the scholars and masters of the University of the said city, both regulars and seculars, for their advantage and use in study, according to the manner here subjoined, which is as follows: 123

Five of the scholars dwelling in the aforesaid Hall are to be appointed by the master of that Hall and to them the keeping of all the books is to be deputed. Of these five, three, and in no case fewer, shall have power to lend out a book or books solely for inspection and use in study; but for copying and transcribing we allow no book to pass beyond the walls of the house. Therefore, when any scholar secular or religious, whom we reckon as on equal footing in our present favour, shall ask for the loan of any book, let the keepers carefully consider whether they have the book in duplicate. If so, let them lend him the book, after taking a security whose

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value in their judgment is greater than that of the book lent, and make out at once a written entry
124 concerning the security and the book lent, with the names of those who have delivered the book and of him who has received it, together with the day and the year of our Lord when the loan was made. But if the keepers find that the book required is not in duplicate, let them in no wise lend that book to any one out of the company of scholars of the said Hall, except it be for inspection within the walls of the house or Hall aforesaid, but not for removal beyond them. But any book may be loaned by three of the aforesaid keepers to any scholar of the said Hall; his name and the day in which he receives the book being first noted down. He may not, however, lend to another the book that has been delivered to him, except on leave of three of the above-mentioned keepers, and then let the name of the first borrower be erased and the name of the second, with the time of delivery, written in its place.

All the keepers shall bind themselves to observe all these rules when the custody of the books is

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committed to them, and those who receive a book or books shall swear in like manner that they will use the books for no other purpose than inspection and study, and will neither take them nor suffer them to be taken beyond the city of Oxford with its suburbs. 125

Once a year, moreover, the above-mentioned keepers shall render an account to the master of the house and to two of the scholars to be selected by him, or if he has not leisure, let him appoint three inspectors, other than the keepers, to read through the catalogue of the books and see that they have them all, either in the volumes themselves or at least in the securities that are at hand. For taking this account we think a suitable time to be between the first of June and the subsequent feast of the translation of the glorious martyr Saint Thomas.

But this we must add, that each and every one who has been loaned a book shall bring it once in the year to the keepers and, if he like, see his security. Furthermore, if any book should happen to be lost through death, theft, fraud, or careless-

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ness, let him who has lost it, or his administrator
or executor, pay the price of the book and receive
the security; but if profit should in any way
accrue to the keepers themselves, it is to be devoted
126 to none other purpose than the repair and maintenance of books.





TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

An Exhortation to Scholars to Repay in Supplications on Our Behalf
the Debt of Piety They Owe.

 TIME now grows clamourous that we should finish the treatise we have put together on the love of books, in which we have tried to account for the amazement of our contemporaries at our great delight in books. But since scarce anything is granted unto mortals to perform that is not sprinkled with the dust of vanity, we do not dare to justify wholly the studious love we have so long cherished for books, for haply it has been the occasion of some venial sins on our part, although the subject of our love was honourable and our pursuit of it moderate. For if when we have done everything we are bound to say 127

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that we are unprofitable servants, if the most holy Job feared all his own works, if, as Isaiah saith, all our righteousness is as filthy rags, who shall presume to boast of perfection in any virtue, that he should not merit condemnation for some circumstance he could in no way have foreseen? For good springs out of simple sources, but evil in manifold ways, as Dionysius instructs us in his book On Divine Names.

Wherefore, being about to ask the aid of prayers for the remission of our sins, by which we confess that we have too often offended the Creator, we have thought it well to exhort our future students to be so far grateful, both to us and their other future benefactors, as to make return by spiritual recompense for our provident benefactions. May we live enshrined in the memories of those who yet unborn are to live on the support of our bounty.

Let them with instant importunity implore the
128 mercy of the Redeemer to the end that He may spare our shortcomings. That the pious Judge may look lightly on our offences, and cover the lapses of our frailty with the cloak of piety. That the things

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which we are ashamed and grieved at having committed, He may pardon in divine compassion. That He may preserve in us, until a sufficient space for repentance, the gifts of His grace, the assurance of faith, the exaltation of our hope, and unbounded charity unto all men. That he may bend our proud will to lamentation for its faults, so that we may deplore its former most vain elations, retract its most bitter indignations, and abhor its most insane delectations. That His virtue may flourish in us when our own hath failed, and that He who graciously consecrated our first steps in holy baptism and undeservedly exalted our advance to the apostolic state, may deign to strengthen our departure by fitting sacraments. That the love of the flesh may be loosened from our spirit. That the fear of death may utterly vanish. That we may desire to depart and to be with Christ, and, while dwelling in body only on the earth, in thought and desire our conversation may be in the Eternal Country.

May the Father of mercies and God of all consolation graciously run to meet the prodigal returning from the husks! May He receive the piece of

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money that was lost and is found, and transmit it by holy angels to His eternal treasury. May He with terrible countenance drive afar the spirits of darkness at the hour of our departure, lest Leviathan, that old serpent, lurking at the threshold of the gate of death, may prepare unlooked-for snares for our feet. And when we are summoned to the awful judgment-seat, that on the witness of conscience we may receive the things done in the body, may humanity joined to God consider the price of His holy blood that was shed and may God made man regard the frailty of our carnal nature, that it may there pass unpunished where merciful compassion is found to be infinite.

And, further, let our students be ever concerned to present frequently their devout salutations to the Blessed Queen, the Virgin Mother of God, our refuge next after God, to the end that we, who deserve by our manifold offences to meet an angry Judge, may by her help be made worthy to meet Him in peace. May her pious hand depress the
130 scale of the even balance in which our small and few merits shall be weighed, lest (which God for-

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bid!) the gravity of our offences may outweigh them and hurl us damned into the abyss.

Moreover, let them strive to venerate with most devout observance Saint Cuthbert, the confessor of glorious merit, praying without ceasing that he may deign to absolve by his prayers his unworthy vicar, and make him whom he admitted as his successor on the earth his co-assessor in heaven.

Finally, let them beseech God with pure prayers, both of soul and body, that He may restore the spirit which was created after the likeness of the Trinity to its original image, after its sojourn in this world of misery is past, and grant it the eternal vision of His joyful countenance. Amen.



